No. 1071
10 January –
23 Jan. 2003
£1.20

PRIVATE EYE

BUMPER £250 CROSSWORD p30

JANUARY SALE MADNESS!

An offer of no 'interest' to anyone buying Bose®

Product example, 3·2·1 home entertainment system. Hideaway Acoustimass® bass module not shown.

Now available for a limited period: Interest-free offers on all Bose Acoustimass speaker systems, Lifestyle digital systems and the 3-2-1 digital system - now that is interesting!

We could say it's a special seasonal offer, but we won't. It's much more than that, because with a Bose system you'll not only enjoy a better performance during the holiday period but you can also enjoy your favourite music and movies all year round.

That's because every Bose system comes with patented* technologies and unique performance benefits regardless of whether it's a Lifestyle® digital system, Acoustimass speaker system or our unique 3·2·1 home entertainment system for home cinema from just two speakers.

Special interest-free credit plus deferred payment terms make it easier than ever to own a Bose system.

Like the sound of our offer? Then visit your Bose dealer for details and a demonstration. You'll like the sound of our products even more.

BOSE®
Better sound through research®

*Patent issued and/or pending in the U.S. and other certain EU countries

Interest-free credit available on all Bose Lifestyle, 321 and domestic speaker products over £250. For Bose products between £250 and £900 there is 10 months interest-free credit available. For Bose products £901 and over there is 10 months interest-free credit available, plus you will not have to make any payments for six months after paying your deposit. Examples **Ten months interest-free credit after six months deferred repayment.** Bose product price £1,000, pay £100 deposit (10% minimum), loan amount £900, then nothing to pay for six months followed by ten monthly repayments of £90. Total amount payable £1,000 **(0% APR). Ten months interest-free credit.** Bose product price £700, pay £70 deposit (10% minimum), loan amount £630, then ten monthly repayments of £63. Total amount payable £700 **(0% APR)**. Credit subject to acceptance to UK residents aged 18 and over. Written quotations available on request. This offer is available at participating authorised Bose dealers, telephone 0800-0722299 to request a dealer list or brochure or visit www.bose.co.uk. This offer is made by Bose Ltd through First Financial Ltd (PO Box 325, Potters Bar, Enfield, EN6 3JQ). Promotion runs from 3rd November 2002 to 31st January 2003.

Call 0800-0722299 to request a dealer list or brochure and quote PE03. Alternatively, visit our website at www.bose.co.uk

Gnome

DESPITE the bad press that my construction firm, Gnomeys, has had to put up with in recent years, I am delighted to announce that Mr Gordon Brown has awarded us a contract for the renovation of the entire London Underground system.

The fact that we are almost bankrupt, with a share price of just 2½p (from a high of £110 in 1999), is not in any way relevant to our ability to complete this work.

The Chancellor, to his credit, has realised that when it comes to running public services, a private company like Gnomeys is uniquely placed to understand the problems of working underground in the dark, knee-deep in the brown stuff, with a lot of rats running about *(Is this right? E.S.)*

Lord Gnome
Gnomey Construction
Queer Street (closed for repairs)

EDITORIAL
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. Tel: 020 7437 4017.
Fax: 020 7437 0705. **Email:** strobes@private-eye.co.uk
http://www.private-eye.co.uk

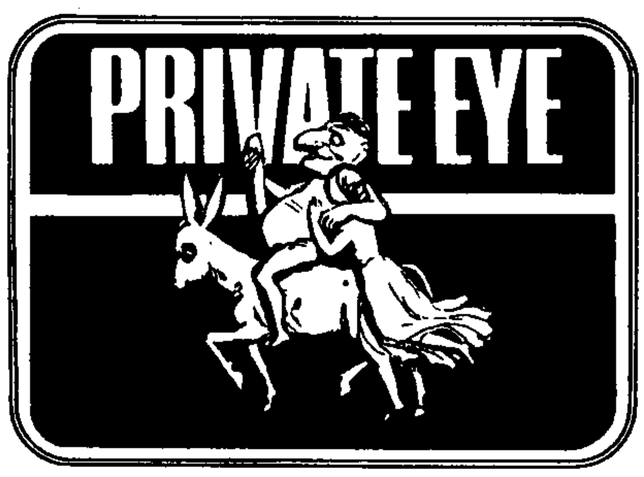
PRIVATE EYE SUBSCRIPTIONS/SALES
PO Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Subscription enquiries: 0870 750 1714
Fax: 01795 414 555. Overseas: 01795 414 871
Special Reports: 0870 750 1711 **Books:** 0870 750 1712
Email: subscriptions@private-eye.co.uk

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
£19 per annum. Europe and Eire £27. Airmail (rest of world) £35. Cheques/POs to Private Eye. Mastercard/Visa.

ADVERTISING
020-7923 5402

Published by Pressdram Ltd, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. **Printed** by BGP Ltd, Bicester OX6 7QZ. **Distributed** by P.E. Distributions, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN. 020 7437 4017.

ABC



January sallies...

- *Fugger, Dominic, Des & the Street of Lame* 4
- *Crankwatch: Aliens land at the Daily Mail* 5
- *What The Papers Don't Say Awards* 5
- *A Liddell case of memory loss: HP Sauce* 6
- *Gong but not forgotten: new year honours* 7
- *Annie Prolix and a one-Schott wonder* 24, 25
- *Transco transgresses: In the Back* 26, 27

EYEBROWS were raised before Christmas when it was revealed that one of the two men who manage Tony and Cherie Blair's "blind trust" is Martin Paisner of City law practice Berwin Leighton Paisner – a firm which has earned millions from lucrative government contracts under "new" Labour.

Seeking a connection between the Vicar and Paisner (son of the legendary Leslie Lazarus Paisner of Goldenballs fame), newspapers speculated that they must have met through their common friend Lord Levy. But a rather more obvious connection escaped notice. Tony Blair's best friend and housemate at Oxford was one Marc Palley, who later shared a basement flat with Tony in Earl's Court and later still served as best man at his wedding. Palley is now a partner in... Berwin Leighton Paisner.

Martin Paisner has said there is no conflict of interest between his role running the Blairs' blind trust and his partnership in a law firm which pitches for (and often receives) government contracts, since he personally has no involvement in BLP's public-sector work.

But Marc Palley has, and cheerfully boasts about it on the BLP website. As well as acting for private companies in PFI bids, Tony's old friend and flatmate has recently been hired by the treasury (for a handsome fee) to supervise a "high profile project" extending the delights of PFI to the provision of accommodation for government departments in Whitehall.

FORMER CBI boss Adair Turner is an ideal choice to chair the government's new independent pensions commission.

His day job as vice chairman of financial managers Merrill Lynch gives him a direct interest in savers channeling their money via the City – a fact which has caused the GMB trade union to demand Turner's resignation before the commission has even had its first meeting.

Neither Mr Turner nor "new" Labour are particularly disposed to question his employment suitability however: despite being hugely rich he was also appointed last autumn as chairman of the low pay commission.

SUPPORTERS of Nuclear Energy (secretary, Sir Bernard Ingham, former press secretary to Margaret Thatcher, arch-enemy of "lame duck" companies subsidised by the taxpayer) have launched a new campaign – for a lame duck company to be subsidised by the taxpayer.

They are worried about the fate of British Energy, whose plight (and the energetic Tory campaign to privatise it in 1996) was revealed in *Eye* 1063. In a letter to the *Financial Times* on 2 January, a group of nuclear enthusiasts set out the case for government action to restore faith in nuclear energy. Their second demand was for "recognition that, if the national interest is served by the reprocessing of nuclear fuel rather than by storing and disposing of spent fuel, the additional cost should be borne by the taxpayer rather than by utilities that are required to be competitive".

The signatories included such ardent Tory privatisers as Lord (Cecil) Parkinson, Lord (Dick) Marsh, Lord Walker and Lord McAlpine that it is hard to see how the Labour government can ignore them.

Court Circular

MARK BOLLAND'S departure from Prince Charles's staff makes him the most high profile casualty yet of Sir Michael Peat's investigation into Chazza's dysfunctional household. But he will not be the last to hand in his notice.

Peat's arrival at St James's Palace last year as Charles's private secretary ruffled the feathers of courtiers used to running the place without letting their boss have much idea of what was being done in his name. The powerful alliance between Michael "the Fence" Fawcett, Charles's, er, personal consultant, and PR man Bolland was derailed by Peat's hands-on style of management. Yet all three might have carried on bitching at each other for years – in true St James's Palace style – had the Paul Burrell bomb not gone off.

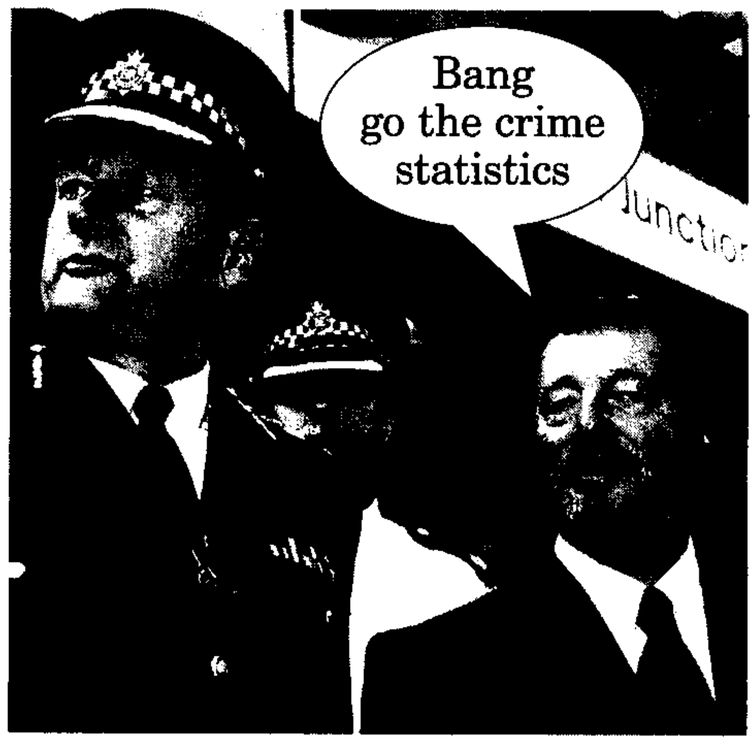
Forced to appease the media, and with Brenda taking a direct interest (much to Charles's annoyance), Charles gave control of the internal inquiry to Peat – to the hissy umbrage of Fawcett and Bolland. The subsequent halting of the second (Harold Brown) butler trial forced Charles to broaden Peat's terms of reference.

Fawcett was now in a hopeless position. Castigated for his overbearing style, dependent on Charles's protection to defend him from internal enemies, accused of being a middleman in the sale of royal gifts and implicated in the cover-up of an alleged gay rape, Fawcett crumbled and went into hiding. Bolland, meanwhile, found himself powerless against a man who doesn't believe in spin and did the media interviews himself. He failed in his attempts to use the influence of the Queen and Lord Luce, the lord chamberlain, by whom he had once been held in high favour (*Eye* 1043). His attempts to discredit Peat by briefing the media about his comfortable lifestyle and wealthy background – such as tipping off snappers about when Peat could be spotted entering Highgrove in his Bentley – were not entertained by royal hacks.

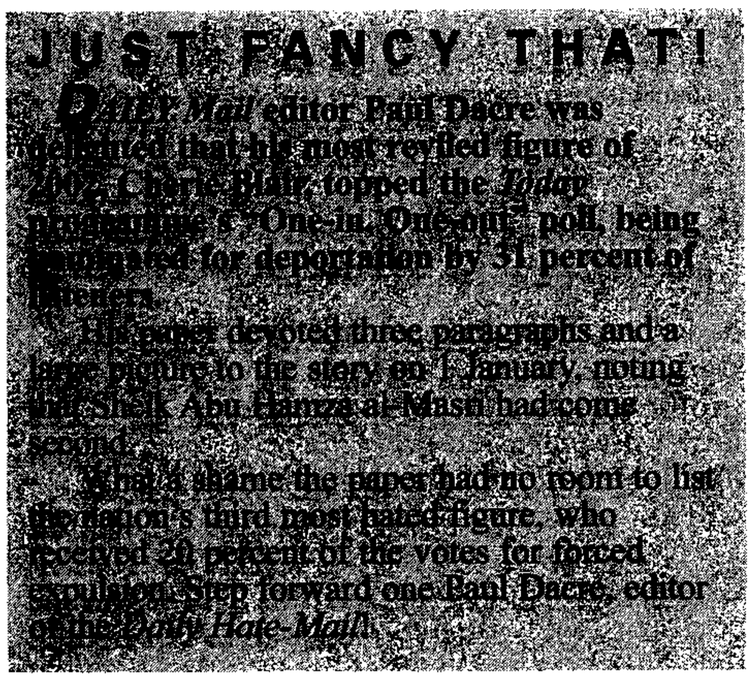
Finding himself friendless, under intense questioning from Peat and hoping to avoid the fall-out from the final published report (now due at Easter), Bolland fell on his sword.

'Flunkey'

GUN LAW SHOCK



Street of Shame


JUST FANCY THAT!
Daily Mail editor Paul Dacre was delighted that his most reviled figure of 2002, Cherie Blair, topped the Today programme's "One-in, One-out" poll, being nominated for deportation by 31 percent of listeners.
The paper devoted three paragraphs and a large picture to the story on 1 January, noting that Sheik Abu Hamza al-Masri had come second.
What a shame the paper had no room to list the nation's third most hated figure, who received 20 percent of the votes for forced expulsion. Step forward one Paul Dacre, editor of the Daily Hate-Mail.

THE *Daily Mail* suffered an odd fit of forgetfulness last month when reporting the conviction of so-called playboy Baron Bloom for indecently assaulting a schoolgirl.

While harrumphing loudly, it gave lashings of sordid details about underage girls apparently falling under Bloom's champagne and Lamborghini influence. And it also found space to report how "a huge family home in Mayfair was bought, where Baron Bloom lived with his younger sister Beverley, self-styled IT girl and shopaholic with a £50,000 a year clothes addiction funded on her father's credit card."

Alas, there was no space to record how Beverley's shopping habit was at least partly funded by the *Mail* itself, which ran a weekly column by her detailing the frivolous party lifestyle it so clearly disapproves of elsewhere.

Perhaps la Bloom's Femail rantings about the latest hip clothes shops and her regular (invariably positive) appearances in the Dumpster Diary, which ended when her brother was arrested, explain the *Mail*'s forgetfulness.

"ONE in four adults cannot perform basic addition, subtraction and multiplication," the *Daily Mail* revealed on Christmas Eve, reporting the launch of a new government numeracy campaign.

"The figures are a disturbing indictment of decades of sub-standard teaching," thundered education correspondent Sarah Harris.

Harris and her *Mail* colleagues proved themselves well above the national average by giving correct answers to almost all the accompanying "test yourself" quiz, only letting themselves down by dividing 25 by four to make five.

THE *Daily Express* (prop: Richard "Dirty Des" Desmond) was dismayed by the BBC's decision to broadcast a docudrama on the real-life Virgin Mary over Christmas – a time, surely, for wholesome family entertainment.

Dirty Dick's own Television X channel was certainly aware of its seasonal responsibilities. Christmas Eve offered *Servant Xmas*, focusing on wenches; a festive edition of *Dildo Dan*, and four big films: *Hot Bods*, *Wet Dreams*, *Buffy's First Encounter* and *Nineteen*, which featured lots of desperate, naked thirtysomethings pretending to be nubile teen nymphos.

Christmas Day delights included *Festive Fun*, *Laura's Xmas Booty*, *Butt Addicts*, *Voyeur*, *Love Shack* and, er, *North Pole*. Boxing Day was, naturally, less restrained, featuring *Merry Mam Meltdown*, *Sex Crazy Christmas* and the seminal (sic) *Strap-On Xmas Special*. Much better than all that BBC history filth.

PS: There's still no sign of Dirty Dick divesting himself of his porn assets, which generate the vast profits needed to pay for *Express* columnists like Vanessa Feltz and Alan Titchmarsh and to fund the planned spring launch of a new London evening to rival the *Standard*.

PORN king Richard Desmond has taken umbrage at the extracurricular activities of one of his staff at the *Daily Express*, the voluptuous features journalist Bella Mansfield. In order to supplement her meagre wage, Mansfield decided, after many years of agonising, that in return for ready money she should model the vast mammaries that have been nature's gift to her (cup size G).

Seeking to avoid any embarrassment at her place of work, Mansfield decided to offer her sacred balcony to the *Sport* on condition that it graft someone else's head on to her body. Alas, this condition was not met and she came to rue the day that she worked for the only proprietor in Fleet Street who surveys the pages of the *Sport* as a matter of course. Dirty Des immediately let his resentment be known that Mansfield had chosen to expose her substantial façade to the enemy rather than to one of his own porn titles.

I'm getting married in the Moron,
Ding-dong the bells are gonna chime!

READERS of the local press have alerted the *Eye* to the odd news that the *Daily Moron* has applied to Tower Hamlets council for its editor's office to be registered as "premises where civil marriages may take place" under the provisions of the marriages act 1994.

Surely, they ask, Piers Moron is not going to remarry in the wonderfully romantic setting of his own office? No, sadly not. This is a super Valentine's Day stunt – a lucky pair of *Moron* readers will be getting married in Piers' 22nd floor office at Canary Wharf with its spectacular views over London.

The original plan was for the wedding to take place in the paper's newsroom, but a council official sent to inspect the joint concluded that it was insufficiently "seemly and dignified". Unlike the office belonging to the seemly and dignified editor. Happily this exciting venue will not only be available to two *Mirror* readers. If the licence, which costs £650 and lasts three years, is approved, under the terms of the act Moron's office must be made "regularly available" for civil marriages. So that means *anyone* resident in England and Wales can apply to be married there! It would surely be cynical to believe that after 14 February Moron will refuse access and therefore lose his licence.

Just in case, however, couples hoping to be married in this glamorous setting should apply *before* 14 February. Brides dreaming of a fairytale wedding in the sky, book your great day now. Apply to: Piers Morgan, Editor's Office, Daily Mirror, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 2BG.

AS EVERY broadsheet editor knows, charity begins in the home news pages, and the annual round of Christmas appeals provides a great way to help those less fortunate than yourself – ie hacks who desperately need something to write about during the festive period.

Judging by this season's crop, some newspaper fundraisers are better at filling their own pages rather than the coffers of needy causes.

The *Guardian* and *Observer* were the most successful, raising nearly 10,000 words across all sections since the end of November on projects run by their two chosen charities: WaterAid and Fairbridge. Last week, a glowing editorial by Alan Rusbridger announced that a total of £336,000 had been raised – or, to put it in context, nearly 88p per reader.

The *Telegraph* again used its more novel approach, with columnists who spend most of their time avoiding phonecalls from readers volunteering to have their ears bent in a day-long telethon as long as a donation was also pledged to a range of charities. By 22 December it had managed an impressive £739,000 – around 79p per reader.

At the *Times* last week the heads of two children's charities were maintaining that "just as gratifying as the donations are the letters and cards of support that the charities have received from *Times* readers" – which is good, because they only forked out an average of 27p a head, raising a total of just £175,000.

AMONG the many end-of-year newspaper award ceremonies, none was grander than the Pall Mall reception at which Dame Harold Evans, 93, escorted by his lovely young wife Tina Brown, modestly accepted the title "Greatest Editor of All Time" from the *British Journalism Review*.

The event was organised by the Dame's chum Lord Puttnam, whose PA ordered old *Sunday Times* hacks to gear up their zimmer frames and turn up to cheer. But the Dame was less than delighted to notice that they included former *ST* education correspondent Peter Wilby, who now edits the *New Statesman*. "You're a revolutionary careerist!" Evans hissed at a puzzled Wilby.

Might his fury by any chance be related to Wilby's decision to run a review of Judy Bachrach's scurrilously hilarious book, *Tina and Harry Come to America*? The Dame and his bride, both lifelong campaigners for press freedom, used their lawyers to ensure that the book was unobtainable in Britain – but not before yet another former *Sunday Times* hack, Peter Dunn, got hold of a copy and offered it to the *NS* for review.

Oddly enough, despite having worked under the Dame for many years, Dunn was not on Lord Puttnam's guest list.

PLAYING SILLY FUGGERS

"IT SOUNDS like something out of an Ian Fleming novel," the *Sunday Telegraph* reported excitedly on 5 May last year. "An Egyptian magnate, a plot to smuggle enriched uranium used in the making of nuclear weapons, and a mystery fax that no one will admit to sending. It is, in fact, just the latest intrigue involving Mohamed Fayed, the owner of Harrods..."

It was indeed just like a Fleming novel: pure fiction, as we pointed out at the time (*Eye* 1054). It concerned a fax supposedly addressed to Fayed which had been found by Portuguese police in the house of a man alleged to be behind an operation to smuggle uranium to Osama bin Laden. Even in its original piece, the *Telegraph* was obliged to concede that Fayed denied knowing any of the people involved, and "investigating authorities have no idea if Mr Fayed knew of the fax's existence, or even if it was sent".

Last weekend the paper duly capitulated, printing a grovelling apology to the Phoney Pharaoh on page 3 and a long letter from him on page 22. Substantial damages have also been paid.

The greatest mystery in the case of the "mystery fax" was why on earth the *Telegraph* filled most of page three with a story for which there was no supporting evidence whatsoever, and which was bound to provoke a libel action from Fayed by recklessly linking his name with that of Osama bin Laden. Although no fewer than five *Telegraph* hacks had been despatched to investigate, they turned up nothing new. Yet editor Dominic Lawson still insisted on running a huge and prominent article, filling much of page three.

Could it be that Lawson's understandable loathing for Fayed – who has falsely accused him of being an MI6 agent – warped his judgement? This is Fayed's theory; and, perhaps for the first time in his life, he may be right.

PS: Of the many hilarious lines in Fayed's letter in the *Telegraph* last Sunday, this is undoubtedly the funniest: "It is the proper role of a free press in a democracy continually to scrutinise those with positions of power and responsibility. But, in doing so, newspapers have a duty to report accurately, objectively and fairly."

The joke will be particularly appreciated by former readers of *Punch*, *Scallywag* and other Fayed-backed publications: how curious that he never bothered to inform his editors of this sacred duty!

PPS: Students of Fayed's fuggin' language may have been surprised by the stately, obscenity-free style of the letter in the *Sunday Telegraph*. It was in fact written for him by former BBC foreign correspondent and Sky News presenter Christopher Morris, who now occupies the thankless "Michael Cole" position in the pharaoh's entourage.

DE-PRESS AWARDS

GUESTS at the particularly dire *What the Papers Say* awards before Christmas endured not only a speech of gut-wrenching self-pity from Edwina Currie (it didn't raise a single laugh), but the sight of "award-winning" tabloid editors, including Paul Dacre and Piers "Moron" Morgan, trashing one another.

Dacre, on a rare public appearance, also hissed his thanks to a bristling Alastair Campbell "for all of your help during Cheriegate". Ouch!

In a celebration of how dumb some papers have become, Eamon McCabe handed the Photograph of the Year award to Moron and the *Mirror* for a world cup photo-montage of the Argentinian squad carrying handbags. This should have been the Conjuring Up Front Pages From Whatever Turns Up In Your Email Inbox award. For the "picture" in question had been doing the rounds on the net for nearly a week before the *Mirror* made it its own. Nevertheless Moron accepted the gong on behalf of the man behind it, web designer Carl Baldwin, whom he described as "a real genius".

Genius or not Baldwin had no idea the *Mirror* was going to use his work and said he was "gobsmacked" when he saw the front page. When he then contacted the rag he was belatedly offered the chance to "join the *Daily Mirror*" and "produce a jokey guide to the world cup exclusively for our readers". Nothing else by Baldwin has appeared.

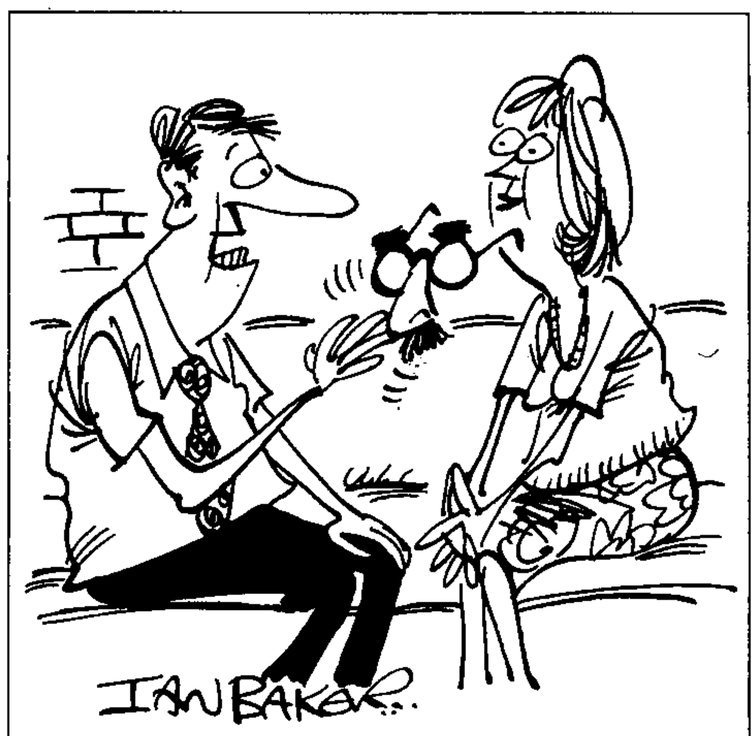
Grizzled Fleet Street hands thought things couldn't get any worse until compere John Sergeant then announced the showbiz hackery awards. "Once upon a time," he warbled, "aspiring journalists dreamed of becoming a Woodward or a Bernstein. Not any more! Now they dream of becoming... the 3am girls!"

This wasn't the only crass prize. Reporter of the Year went to the *Mirror*'s Steve Dennis for his "groundbreaking" interview with Paul Burrell. This, remember, was an interview obtained by "the only paper he could trust" (*Mirror*, 7 December) to print exactly what "the man of simple integrity" demanded.

Elsewhere *Daily Star* editor Paul Hill's "journalistic excellence" earned him Editor of the Year. His "daily dose of sex and sports" thrilled the judges: "Hill's understanding of his audience is brilliant", they said. An example? "Hollywood hunk Ben Affleck was given a bum errand – finding extra soft loo paper for his girlfriend" (31 December).

Hill owes his prize to the fact that at the last minute the judges, mindful of the record of his proprietor, porn king Richard "Dirty" Desmond, thought twice about making the *Star* Newspaper of the Year.

The *What the Papers Say* programme, which now appears only sporadically, probably owes its survival to the awards which allow Granada and BBC executives to schmooze potential press critics over lunch at the Savoy. The only light relief this year came from the Christmas crackers. One exploded in Alastair Campbell's lap... and produced a small nail brush.



"Why, Miss Beckett... you look so different without your glasses!"

CRANKWATCH

Stars of Wonder

"SCIENTISTS from a bizarre religious cult claimed yesterday to have produced the world's first human clone," a horrified *Daily Mail* reported on 28 December. An accompanying editorial suggested that the views of this cult would make people "queasy".

What is so bizarre about the Raelians? Allow the *Mail* to explain: the Raelians believe that "extra-terrestrials created the human race 25,000 years ago", and that the sect's leader was briefly kidnapped by aliens in 1973 and taken on their spacecraft to another planet.

The *Daily Mail* itself has quite an appetite for the bizarre – or, if you prefer, blithering bollocks. Immediately above its front-page splash on 28 December were puffs for a series on "your stars for the year ahead", plus a special offer of a "FREE personal star calendar specially for you". But thanks to its obsession with horoscopes, Nostradamus and the lost city of Atlantis, the *Mail* seldom has space for more than one or two major series a year about alien spacecraft.

In March 1998 it ran several features by Colin Wilson claiming that extra-terrestrials have been "conducting some mass breeding experiment on the human race", and have done so for thousands of years – "perhaps for as long as man has been on the Earth". A few months later it had a 4,000-word feature asking "Does a Long-Dead Alien Civilisation on Mars Really Hold the Key to Human Survival?" To which the answer was a resounding yes: an early civilisation of "extra-terrestrial voyagers" placed a rock-formation looking vaguely like the Sphinx on the surface of Mars "as a beacon to mankind".

In November 2000 it serialised a book by UFO-crank Timothy Good revealing his new alien theory – that "beings from outer space [have been] establishing secret bases on Earth, and travelling in ships that are just as much at home beneath the sea as they are in the skies". In the first instalment, spread over four pages, Good reported that Puerto Rico "is the site of a huge subterranean alien base – a secret complex extending deep into the ocean, constructed by aliens and visited frequently by their craft".

His source for this was an American reporter who didn't wish to be identified, who in turn heard it from an unnamed officer in the US Air Force.

In the past year, however, the *Mail*'s interest has quickened. Last May, the news that ice has been found on Mars merited a 1,500-word feature under the headline: "Yes, There Could Be Little Green Men". In July the *Mail* noted that a new crop circle near Stonehenge had been placed with such "pinpoint precision" that it might well have been left by aliens. Two weeks later it reported on a "mysterious blue object travelling at 'phenomenal speed'", which had been sighted in Maryland.

On 7 November there was an interview with Reg Presley of the Troggs – who "is now obsessed with UFOs and aliens". Reg was duly given a full page to expound his theory that crop circles are "alien graffiti", and that a crop formation in the shape of male genitalia, seen in a field near Chequers some years ago, was probably an attempt by extra-terrestrials to "reveal the truth" about John Major's affair with Edwina Currie. A week later the *Mail* had a long story about a computer hacker with a "UFO obsession".

But what of its own UFO obsession? On 4 December 2002, under the headline "Visitors From Another Planet", it reported that several 15th century paintings depict "strange objects in the sky". Clouds, actually, to judge by the pictures in question. Two days later came the headline "The Day The Aliens Landed... in Suffolk", above a full-page report on the alleged landing of an alien spaceship in Rendlesham Forest, Suffolk, in 1980 – a hoary old yarn that has long since been explained. (Marks in the soil, said to be left by the spaceship's landing gear, were in fact rabbit diggings.) Nevertheless, the *Mail* recycled it all over again as a "news" story, embellished with an artist's impression of an extra-terrestrial.

Meanwhile, for an entire week in December the *Mail* ran extracts from the latest book on "the Bible Code", a fantasy dreamed up by American hack Michael Drosnin to prove that a hidden code in the Bible foretold the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. The cipher, Drosnin revealed, was created by extra-terrestrials thousands of years ago: "There were clear references to what can only be called 'UFOs' in the unencoded text of the Bible – most notably in the Book of Ezekiel, which tells of a flying chariot in the sky from which four living beings emerged.

This drivel – no less bizarre than the Raelians' beliefs – prompted no mockery or scepticism from the *Mail*. Far from it: "Dare we ignore this message?" it demanded. Can it be long before editor Paul Dacre bows to the inevitable and renames his paper the *Daily Rael*?

DESPITE the efforts of "new" Labour's panjandrums at the party's new HQ in Old Queen Street, doddery old Labour MPs are showing a marked reluctance to retire to make way for new Labour wimmin.

All members of the parliamentary Labour party were given until 23 December to decide whether to retire or not and so far only a handful have done so (the cut-off date allows most of the available seats to go to wimmin). The most ancient and venerable say they are reluctant to stand down because of the likelihood their seats will be taken by on-message Blairistas. In fact many will hang on to see what peerages and other baubles will be dangled before them as the general election approaches. "Late retirements" get round the party's all-women shortlists policy, conveniently allowing party HQ to parachute favoured sons into Westminster.

CONNEX South-East's announcement that it would be increasing the cost of season tickets despite boasting the lowest level of customer satisfaction in the network, and receiving a windfall £58m of taxpayers' money on top of a previous £30m handout, has provoked passionate indignation in Kent's leafy commuter belt.

Speaking for his downtrodden constituents in Tunbridge Wells, Tory MP Archie Norman told his local paper: "Commuters have had a bad deal out of Connex and it's getting even worse. Recent train performances have been poor and the new trains are still mostly on hold. From the beginning this is a company that has over-promised and under-delivered."

Norman is, of course, an expert on rail companies that over-promise and under-deliver, especially those enjoying the benefit of huge government subsidies. From 1994 to 2000 he was a shareholder in and director of Failtrack.

K CHRISTMAS
PUDDING CHARMS
Sterling silver charms to bring good fortune. Potential choking hazard: do not use with food.
Past Times

LIDDELL BY LIDDELL

EMINENT press baron Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill was summoned to the London office of Helen Liddell MP, secretary of state for Scotland, last month.

"Why do you think people didn't want the *Scotsman* to win the bid?" she asked, referring to the rejection of a bid by Brillo's newspaper group for the rival Glasgow *Herald* titles.

"Because they don't like me and they don't like our politics," Neill suggested, plausibly enough.

"No," Liddell announced. "It is because your newspapers are consistently inaccurate... Doesn't it bother you that your papers are filled with such inaccuracies every day?" She then handed over a two-page "dossier" supposedly listing the worst examples, mostly tiny stories concerning dustbin-bags or loose paving stones.

Bizarrely the catalogue of inaccuracies included an article written on 12 November by, er, Helen Liddell herself. She also complained that no fewer than three readers' letters had been published over the previous six months criticising her performance.

Poor little diddums. Of course it may well be that Liddell, fondly known north of the border as "Stalin's Granny", has nothing better to do with her time: although she gets a six-figure ministerial salary, her job is effectively otiose now that Scotland has its own parliament and first minister. But since when has she had such a high-minded aversion to "inaccuracies"?

In 1994, when she was Labour candidate at the Monklands East by-election following John Smith's death, Liddell angrily denounced comments by the SNP about her connection with dead crook Robert Maxwell. "The truth is I have never worked for Robert Maxwell," she told a Scottish news agency. "It is a smear to suggest I was ever employed by him."

Not so: between 1988 and 1992 she was director of corporate affairs for Maxwell's Scottish newspaper empire. Liddell then changed her story slightly, explaining to the *Daily Express* that "like everyone else at the *Daily Record* and *Sunday Mail* I worked for Maxwell, but I did not work *with* him."

This too was a lie. As the *Eye* noted at the time, she clung so closely to Cap'n Bob that at a Commonwealth Games event in 1988 she even followed him into the gents' lavatory. She also accompanied the fat man in his private plane on trips abroad, including a sortie to Bulgaria to tell the new government how to run its elections. And she worked with him on the Mirror Group flotation.

Interviewed by the *Sunday Telegraph* five years ago, Helen Liddell – by then minister for pensions (*sic*) – further embellished the tale by recalling her "surprise" when Maxwell rang out of the blue in 1988 and offered her a seat on the board. This was yet another lie: in fact, it was Liddell who originally contacted Maxwell out of the blue, when she wrote to him on 26 October 1987 asking for a job – adding that "I hope you do not find this approach impertinent."

The next time she has the impertinence to complain about sloppy journalism, no doubt Brillo Pad will remind Stalin's Granny of her own distinguished contributions to the genre.

'Backbiter'

CRIMINAL DELAYS

CRAPITA continues to live up to its reputation for delay and inefficiency.

A primary school teacher, working for two months without formal clearance because of the continuing backlog at the Crapita-run criminal records bureau (CRB), finally got a letter just before Christmas. Not to confirm that she was fit to work with children, but to tell her she had omitted to fill in the postcode for an address she had lived at three years ago. She had, however, given the house number, street, local area and city.

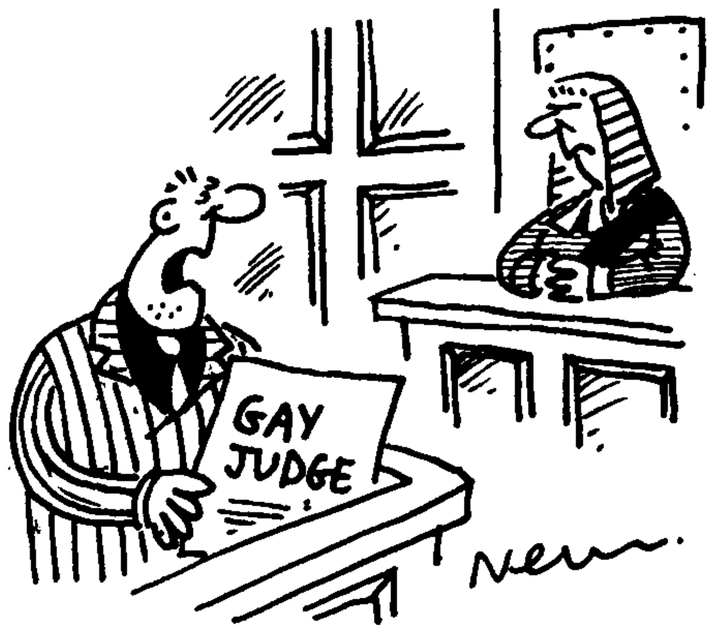
Royal Mail has a helpful postcode finder accessible in seconds on the web, but the CRB "service delivery manager" decided instead to spend more time writing a letter pointing out the oversight to the teacher and returning the application – thus sending it back to square one and causing several more months delay no doubt.

Legal News

THE trial of the teenagers accused of killing 10-year-old Damilola Taylor collapsed in April 2002 after the judge ruled that the evidence of a 14-year-old witness was unreliable. She was found to have changed her story several times in the hope of gaining a £50,000 reward offered by the *Daily Mail* three days after Damilola's death, which Mr Justice Hooper described as an "inducement" for her to lie.

At the time, Baroness Scotland of the lord chancellor's department proposed that newspapers should pick up the bill for trials which collapsed because of their payments to witnesses. And last month's independent report by the Bishop of Birmingham on the investigation was also critical of the way newspapers offer rewards in high-profile cases.

Within two days of last week's murder of 18-year-old Charlene Ellis and 17-year-old Latisha Shakespear, as police again bemoaned the unwillingness of those in the black community to come forward as witnesses, a £25,000 reward was on offer "for information leading directly to the arrest and conviction of the killers". Who was behind this generous inducement? Step forward the *Daily Mail*!



"I'll go straight if you will, your honour"

TANGLED WEB

BRITAIN's car number plates bosses at the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) were given a stern telling off by cyber-squatting watchdogs after trying to hijack the domain name dvla.com from a small US firm.

The Geneva-based World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) ruled that the UK government agency had acted in bad faith and "attempted reverse domain name hijacking". The DVLA tried to force Pennsylvania firm DVL Automation – which builds control systems for industrial plants, power stations and hospitals – to give up the web address it has used for the past six years.

DVLA's main official website is at www.dvla.gov.uk but the Swansea-based agency wanted the .com address to run a commercial site selling "personalised" registration plates. Its argument was basically that it was the most famous DVLA in the world and should therefore be allowed to take the web address.

WIPO arbitration panellist Dan Hunter said the argument was unsupportable, adding: "Even if the complainant were *the* leading vehicle licensing agency in the world, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of people on the other side of the Atlantic would be unaware of its existence, just as the majority of British subjects will be unaware of the Pennsylvania Department of Transport... The legal basis for this claim is a mystery."

All of which leaves one wondering where the DVLA found the time to dream up such a creative way to waste money on lawyers. Surely the agency has better things to do – like searching for the 3,500 lost passports and birth certificates sent to the DVLA as proof of ID in the past 12 months (*Eyes passim*).

NEW YEAR'S HONOURS

Arms Dealers

TONY BLAIR's spokesman Alastair Campbell said the new year's honours list "might not be the glitziest" we've seen in recent years. But there was still plenty of room for the government staple, arms dealers.

John Rose, the £948,000-a-year chief executive of **Rolls Royce**, was knighted for "services to the defence industries". OBEs went to Roger James, regional head of combat helicopter manufacturer **Westland**, and David Morgan, an expert in "novel weapons" for **MBDA Missiles**, the world's biggest missile maker, part-owned by **BAE Systems**. Mike Salmons, a director at **BAE Systems Marine** also got an OBE.

MBEs went to the lower ranks in the arms industry, including David Coghill, William Renton and John Deans, respectively an "office scheduler", a "project manager" and an industrial relations adviser for BAE Systems. Deans, who was a union rep before he became a BAE adviser, may have a busy year as BAE workers are threatening to strike over pensions.

MBEs also went to Jeremy Pettican Tracy, Westland Helicopters chief test pilot; Josephine Ward, a customer support manager for MBDA Missiles; Keith Weaver, a team leader at warship builder **Vosper Thorneycroft**; and Marie Johnstone, a public relations officer with **Thales Optronics**, a French arms firm which specialises in military night vision goggles, thermal sights, submarine periscopes and the like.

George Aaron from recruitment agency **Turner Charles** got an MBE for working on the Nimrod Integrated project – the disastrous RAF programme. The Nimrods were due to land on the tarmac some 31 months ago.

The 'Sharp End'

Campbell also claimed the list was "about rewarding those who worked and served at the sharp end – people who had really changed things, or who had given outstanding service to others in difficult situations". With the government fretting about "delivery" of public services, the awards embraced some notable public servants.

There was a knighthood for Nigel Crisp, chief executive of the **NHS,** who really has done sterling work at "the sharp end". He approved the NHS vaccine contract to buy smallpox vaccine from Powderject, the firm owned by Labour donor Paul Drayson, and defended the NHS move into property speculation with the NHS Estates PFI scheme.

A CBE went to Peter Coates, head of the private finance unit at the **department of health.** Coates is the most important civil servant pushing the privatisation of NHS hospitals. Melinda Letts, chairwoman of the **Long Term Medical Conditions Alliance,** received an OBE. As *Eye* readers will recall, she surprised other health charity workers last year by writing to every member of the House of Lords urging them to back the government and abolish community health councils. The revelation that her letter was posted to their lordships by the health department left her looking like a government stooge.

Another man at the sharp end, **London Underground** board member and chief engineer Keith Beattie, won an OBE just days before the first tube PPP contract handed the underground over to firms including Jarvis and Amey. It was Beattie who once wrote a memo saying that the "shadow running" of the PPP scheme led "to a confusing set of management arrangements" which "could lead to a deterioration in control over fire safety and compliance with relevant legislation". He added that "it is likely that LUL would find itself being prosecuted for failure to comply and, if matters rest for too long, there is a possibility that a significant fire could occur as a result of poor controls." Happily he's now fully in favour of the PPP.

Humble Folk

The government stressed that the awards honoured humble folk like "school cleaners, a dinner lady, a milkman, a lock-keeper, a bus driver, a school-crossing warden and a wealth of other people who had all done very fine work at a local level". This may be true to a degree, but happily many very unhumble, fantastically wealthy people got gongs too.

Peter Burt, outgoing deputy chairman of **HBOS bank,** used to have a £994,000 salary but is now reduced to scraping by on £286,000 worth of pension. But at least he's now a Sir – his knighthood reflecting achievements like the abortive attempt to launch a joint venture between Bank of Scotland and ultra-right American evangelist Pat Robertson. At the time Burt said: "I would say he [Robertson] comes across as a very kindly man." Under Robertson, his bank was a major backer of Labour's PFI schemes.

What A Gas

The energy industry attracted lots of awards. Jim Forbes, outgoing chief executive of **Scottish & Southern** energy, now has a CBE to accompany his miserly yearly pension of around £268,305. An OBE went to Lynda Armstrong, new business development director at **Shell UK**. An OBE went to John Mumford, director of **BP Oil UK,** "for services to the environment".

Irish Setter

Recently retired **Northern Ireland civil service** head Gerry Loughran's new year knighthood raised eyebrows in Ulster, where Sir Gerry appeared in a damning report on misdeeds at the Northern Ireland tourist board (NITB).

Loughran was permanent secretary at the quango's parent body, the department of enterprise, from 1991 to 2000. He was therefore accounting officer – the official ultimately responsible for expenditure – for NITB for much of the period investigated last year by the Ulster assembly's public accounts committee (PAC).

Its recent report on the tourist board (*Eyes passim*) concluded that there had been "a catalogue of serious failures of management, corporate governance and financial control". And it added: "The committee's view is that the causes of the problems experienced by the tourist board lie as much with the department and its accounting officers, as they do with the tourist board." The accounting officers, said the PAC, had "signally failed to perform their supervisory duty".

Justice

Nice to see equality in practice when Prince Charles presented the Queen's birthday honours just before Christmas. There was an OBE for Don Hale, the former editor of the *Matlock Mercury*, whose tireless campaign helped secure the release of Stephen Downing after 27 years in jail for the murder of Wendy Sewell – a crime he did not commit. And there was an OBE for Robert James Wood, deputy chief constable of Derbyshire police – the force that investigated the Sewell murder!

BRUSSELS SPROUTS

MORE on the 17m euro (£11m) fraud at the Madrid-based think tank IRELA, the Institute for European-Latin American Relations.

The sound of buck-passing by Euro MPs and bureaucrats who allowed taxpayers to be robbed blind by institute staff is now reaching a deafening crescendo.

As *Eye* readers will recall, the unjustified salaries, expenses, travel, training courses and housing allowances for IRELA staff, as well as unsuccessful speculation on the Madrid stock exchange, were well documented in a report by OLAF, the European commission's limp-wristed anti-fraud office.

A year on, and following a belated exposé in Madrid's *El Pais*, a European parliament spokesman has claimed with perfect mendaciousness that the MEPs and others who were supposed to direct IRELA are in the clear. But they are not and their complicity in the scandal is only too obvious.

The commission, meanwhile, has announced that it's holding its own inquiry "to obtain a more precise and complete view of the situation" and that, bizarrely, until this is completed no disciplinary action will be taken against officials who presided over this already perfectly itemised assault on EU funds.

Those members of the IRELA staff who were honest are still awaiting money owed to them by an outfit which went bust two years ago.

● Will the EU's accounts for 2001 ever be signed off – and if so by whom? The commission is now on its fourth chief accounting officer in about as many minutes – well, a year anyway.

We all know what happened to Marta Adreasen after she refused to sign the accounts because they were so unreliable (she was suspended and is undergoing lengthy disciplinary proceedings). But the commission has now appointed Brian Gray, a Briton, as chief accounting officer. Will he last any longer than his immediate predecessor, Mark Oostens? And will he sign off accounts that allegedly consolidate highly suspect figures from around the regions? Watch this space.

Number crunching

£500m
■ amount government is prepared to spend yearly on flood defences

£1bn
■ amount government is prepared to spend on third Heathrow runway in a flood plain

JUST FANCY THAT!

"BBC TV will screen more than 30 hours of coverage, including 12 hours of love action."
— BBC website on future World Darts coverage

FTV

Without Prejudice
Wife Swap
Fat Plague
(All Channel 4)

ONE of the filthiest bits of English lingo is "I'm not a racist but..." and Channel 4 seems to have decided to start 2003 by concentrating on the buts and, beyond that, the butts. Three of its post-Hogmanay projects examine how we react to other people's flesh.

Without Prejudice, a gameshow hosted by Liza Tarbuck, takes the kind of thing we might say behind the backs of others and encourages it to be said to their fronts. A panel of five members of the public have fifty grand to give away to one member of a quintet of contestants. But here's the twist: there's no skill involved – they get it for who they are.

So, in the first round, the panel simply see the contestants' faces and vote one out. Thus the first elimination comes down to matters such as teeth, hair colour, age and, in theory, race, although here the show's big problem is immediately clear.

While there is racial prejudice in society, it's been driven underground by being made publicly unacceptable. No gameshow panellist now is going to start giving it the BNP stuff, and nor would a channel screen it if they did. So all the programme proves is that it's still okay to be homophobic on national television, while other bigotries have become more subtle.

As the rounds reveal more and more about the contestants –Chris was married but then realised he was gay, Yvonne has been a mistress to four married men — the format emerges as a sub-anthropological version of that office time-passer "Shag, Marry or Kill?" in which the players have to plan their response to a panel of weirdos.

"Very interesting – this process," says Liza T hopefully; but it isn't because the encounters tell us nothing. The producers can rig the responses depending on whom they put on the panel or among the contestants.

The same is true of **Wife Swap**, another gameshow with pretensions to be a Mass Observation Survey, which is car-crash TV of the week.

"Toast is burnt... eggs are runny... now the weather..."

The programme takes two London households. One is occupied by a Mr and Mrs Blobby pair of working-class extra-extra-larges who aren't racist but don't think black and white people should marry. Inevitably, the other pair are a smart young black couple. For a fortnight, the ladies of the establishments are swapped over, substituting for their predecessor in the kitchen and the living room although not, apparently, the bedroom.

Strangely, given that it started in the same week as *Without Prejudice*, one of the problems of *Wife-Swap* is that too much about the contestants is withheld. We never know what jobs they have or what happened in previous relationships. All that keeps us watching is the terrible feeling that they are about to call each other "black" or "fat".

Again, there's a strong sense of rigging. Dee (Mrs Blobby) and Lance (the arrogant, chippy half of the other partnership) would simply have avoided each other's paths in real life but are now forced to live together for two weeks on TV. What does this prove apart from the immediately obvious fact that they wouldn't get on? "If you were my woman, I'd trade you in for anything," screams Lance. "I'd throw you out of the fucking window," screeches Dee, who later magnificently informs him: "You're Hitler – and Hitler died!"

The result falls in that thin, dangerous strip of television between the unwatchable and the unmissable but proves beyond doubt that the kind of thing British TV used to sneer at on Japanese TV is now absolutely a part of our own medium. One format which must surely die out here now is superiority-sneer shows such as *Tarrant On TV*.

And, as Channel 4 also started this week a season of shows – led by a documentary called **Fat Plague** – which address what it claims to be the "taboo" of obesity, promoted with tasteful trailers involving pale-fleshed fatties grappling like Sumo wrestlers, the network's new year strategy seems to be to screen freakshows which pose as investigations.

Questioning prejudice while actually demonstrating it is an old tabloid trick and it's come in a big way to what is supposed to be our most radical television channel.

'Remote-Controller'

MEDIA NEWS

AFTER its ambitious review of political coverage, the BBC has decided that its political programmes are too focused on goings-on at Westminster to attract the mythical younger audiences.

Hence *Westminster Live* will be replaced by the geographically neutral *The Politics Show*, which will feature 20-minute opt-outs from Scotland, Northern Ireland and the "English regions".

The idea is modelled on the Scottish withdrawal from the final part of *Newsnight*, repeatedly mocked by Jeremy Paxman – and ignored by most Scots who would rather watch stuff from London like everyone else.

As the feeble turnout for local elections suggests, local and regional politics could be an even bigger turn-off for today's yoof.

"ON the *Six* we are always trying to make difficult subjects accessible. This show is the reverse, giving a more intelligent angle to accessible stories."

So said Jay Hunt, editor of the BBC's dumbed down *Six O'Clock "News"* bulletin, announcing her new BBC daytime telly venture. The new show will feature "food, fashion and financial advice" and interviews with people "who have unusual lives". It's a familiar format, presented by a *Pop Idol* judge and featuring *Six* reporters like Robert Nisbet and Rosie Millard whom nobody knows what to do with. It will also provide material for the *Six*, further shrinking the space available for foreign and political news.

DUMB BRITAIN

Lincs FM phone-in

Presenter: Which is the largest Spanish-speaking country in the world?

Contestant: Barcelona.

Presenter: I was really after the name of a country.

Contestant: I'm sorry, I don't know the names of any countries in Spain.

Steve Wright's Big Quiz, Radio 2

Wright: On which continent would you find the River Danube?

Contestant: India.

DUMB AMERICA

The Weakest Link, BBC2

Anne Robinson: What was the name of the prison island which closed when the last convicts were transferred in 1963?

Contestant: Australia.

WORLD WAR 11
IT WAS A STAND AGAINST FASCISM...
SIXTY MILLION DEAD...
AND TERRIBLE SACRIFICES OF A WORLD IN CONFLICT...
BUT IN THE END IT WAS ALL WORTHWHILE...
AS WE WOULD NEVER HAD ANYTHING TO WATCH ON TV
SCHEDULES
The World at War
Gladiators of World War Two
The Third Reich in Colour.
Britain's War Heroes.
The Second World War in Colour.
War in the East
Dad's Army
Richard Holmes
The Great Escape
Guns of Navarone
The Dam Busters
633 Squadron
Bridge over the River Kwai
Ken Pyne

GOING LIVE

ITN went live to Mark Geissier on new year's eve for the latest on Edinburgh's end-of-year festivities.

It was 6pm and "the atmosphere is building up already", Geissier reported in front of a handful of shoppers waiting for a bus.

John Draper was in London in a deserted Parliament Square. "There will be a lot of people here later on," he revealed.

RDF Media, which makes *Faking It* and *Scrapheap Challenge*, boasts that it is not only "the fourth largest television producer in Britain" but also "one of the UK's fastest growing companies".

The man largely responsible for this expansion is company founder David Frank, a former investment banker and BBC producer, who has recently been tipped to succeed Dawn Airey as chief executive of Channel 5. Frank says he's staying put, which will reassure nervous investors who might otherwise start asking a few questions about RDF's future. But for how long?

Although RDF revels in its laid back image – free drinks for staff on a Wednesday evening when ideas can be discussed, plush Holland Park offices and big salaries – things are not working out as well as some investors had hoped. The company has closed its Bristol and Manchester offices and shunted Steve Boulton, formerly editor of *World in Action*, who ran RDF Manchester, off the payroll. Anna Beattie, RDF's erstwhile head of features, has also been made to walk the plank, along with Danny Rosenbaum, head of talent.

David Frank recently gave an interview to the *Financial Times* in which he put a preposterous £40m valuation on the company but added that he wouldn't think of selling out until he was offered £100m. This comment was probably made to placate Wafic Said's Sagitta fund management group, which owns a 20 percent stake in RDF and may well be increasingly concerned at the current shenanigans.

Last month the head of business programmes, Hugh Dehn, a weasel-like former *News of the Screws* hack, was sacked for gross misconduct. This followed an embarrassing legal dispute over the rights to an RDF-produced programme about London's richest people that was broadcast by Carlton TV. Dehn had claimed the idea for the programme was his. It was not, and thankfully for RDF the case was settled before going to court. But the final straw for David Frank came when Dehn told a Channel 4 commissioning editor to "fuck off". As RDF relies on Channel 4 for much of its income, unsurprisingly it was Dehn rather than the editor who had to fuck off.

For RDF, too, there may be hope of salvation. The international distribution arm of the business, said to be the gem in the company portfolio, is responsible for marketing "adult entertainment" films such as *Hotter Sex*, *Sex With Strangers*, *The Guns (aka Bazookas on the Beach)* – billed by RDF as "a tale of bullets, bronzed boob jobs and battling egos". If all else fails, perhaps Richard Desmond would be willing to buy the company.

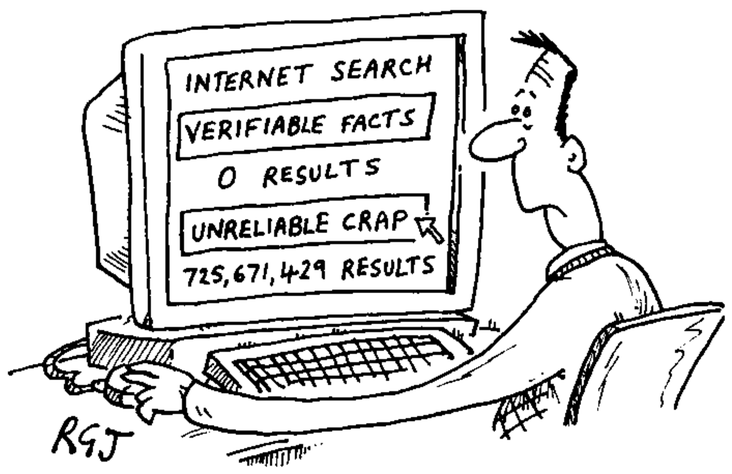
JUST FANCY THAT!

"A WOMAN was being questioned by police yesterday after claims that she was raped at a Sky TV Christmas party. The 21-year-old clerk was found collapsed in a toilet. She was taken to hospital where she told nurses she thought she had been sexually assaulted. Detectives were trying to discover if a date rape drug such as Rohypnol was slipped into her drink during the £100,000 party."

— *Daily Mirror*, 17 December.

"10.00 *Uncovered: Xmas Parties*. A look at the antics people get up to at office parties."

— Sky One schedule, 19 December.



O·B·N·K

Even before you meet Greg Dyke, you know he's going to be busy. You don't get to be the Director General of the entire British Broadcasting Corporation by sitting in your office playing Pitch and Putt on your computer all day; you get there by hard work, perseverance and by not being over enthralled by a good night's sleep.

PAUL WALTON on Greg Dyke
Top Gear Magazine
(Published by BBC Magazines)
(Submitted by J A Mackay)

£10 paid for entries put forward for the Order of the Brown Nose.

AD NAUSEAM

THE new year's most eagerly awaited clash will take place in the arena of confectionery.

"Have a Break. Have a Kit Kat" is one of the best known taglines in advertising, created by J. Walter Thompson for Kit Kat in 1957. It has stayed with the brand ever since and helped it cement its position as the UK's number one chocolate bar.

But last month the high court ruled against owner Nestlé, which had been trying to trademark the tagline "Have a Break" since May. Nestlé produced a survey that said 98 percent of Britons would respond to the phrase "Have a Break" with the words "Have a Kit Kat", but the judge ruled that this did not mean the Swiss giant could claim it owned the phrase.

It would all be of little consequence were it not for the fact that Mars, which has just ditched another of advertising's most enduring slogans, "A Mars a Day helps you Work, Rest and Play" for the rather paltry "Pleasure You Can't Measure", is planning a new product launch later this year. It's to be called "Have a Break".

WHO would have thought that the impending tobacco advertising ban, due to become law on 14 February, would produce such a willing response from the advertising industry?

The rumour mill is rife with reports of grand swansongs being planned by the biggest brands to make maximum capital from their own death throes. M&C Saatchi has been telling anyone who will listen of its impending finale for Silk Cut, which will continue the agency's magnificent creative tradition by involving fat ladies, singing. The imagery is opaque but we think we get it.

Hamlet is also lining up a last hurrah, but has been less forthcoming about the details, except to rubbish rumours of the catchy, if irritating "emphysema song" being released as a novelty record.

Meanwhile an EU directive banning the use of terms like "light" and "mild" to describe low-tar cigarettes appears to have played into the hands of the marketing men. Most brands, including Imperial's Lambert & Butler and Superkings, and Gallaher's B&H and Silk Cut, have decided to use colours as an alternative, so Silk Cut Ultra will now be Silk Cut Silver and so on.

At a stroke this undermines the advertising ban, as whether an instance of a colour can be constituted an advert is open to question. Yet that is precisely the technique of association pioneered by CDP's famous B&H Gold work 20 years ago. If large swathes of purple, blue and silver start appearing come October when the ban comes into force, sniff for smoke.

SPLIT personalities

Bob Moore

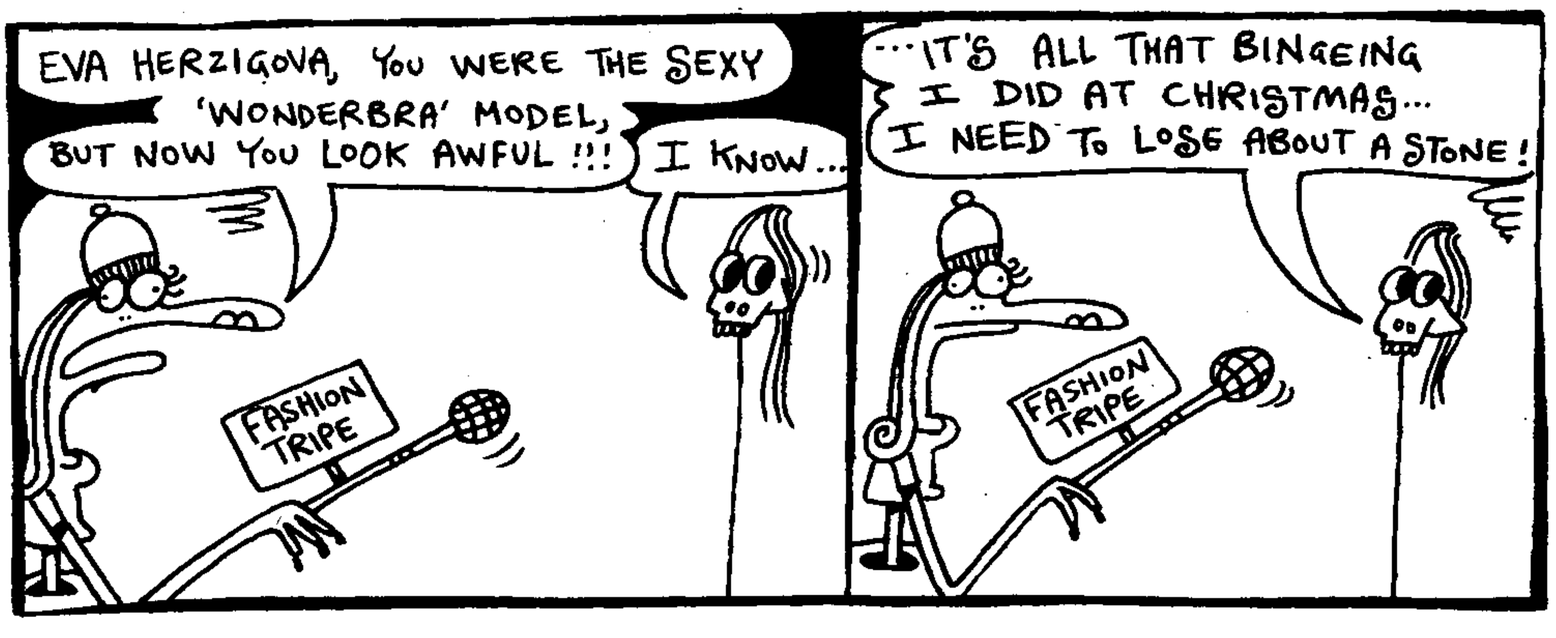
Saddam and the Ants

Henman sees balls as key to his success

Evening Standard

SUPERMODELS

KERBER


EVA HERZIGOVA, YOU WERE THE SEXY 'WONDERBRA' MODEL, BUT NOW YOU LOOK AWFUL !!!
I KNOW...
FASHION TRIPE
...IT'S ALL THAT BINGEING I DID AT CHRISTMAS... I NEED TO LOSE ABOUT A STONE!
FASHION TRIPE

SIGNAL FAILURES

The 10-minute rail strategy

THE rail industry gave a sigh of relief on 14 January last year when the strategic rail authority (SRA) published, more than a year late, its 10-year strategic plan. Here was "a clear direction and a clear set of priorities" to enable "stakeholders to plan with more certainty than ever before".

Well, that was the theory. A year on, the SRA has already contradicted most of its "plan".

"The SRA's goal is to put as many of the remaining short-term [seven-year] franchises as possible on to a more stable footing," it said. Bidders would be asked to quote for "further improvements", and "the enhanceable franchises will normally be let on the basis of a 15-year term". In 2002 no short franchises were re-let; three long franchises (two Virgin, one Connex) became short ones with hefty life-support subsidies; bidders for some "enhanceable franchises" were told subsidies may shrink substantially; and the standard 15-year term was lowered to seven years.

All this undermines the plan's promise to create the stability and clarity needed by investors, and to tackle rising costs (franchise bidders are wasting millions responding to each new SRA "strategy"). Refranchising is so tortuous that stop-gap contracts are continuing to haemorrhage money even though their termination was "a priority".

The plan said: "The SRA's short-term priority is to address the cost pressures from train operations by refranchising, which will deliver best value through competition." But last year the SRA invited no rival bid for the failed big Virgin franchises and granted Stagecoach exclusive negotiations for Isle of Wight — which has the highest subsidy per mile. Connex was shortlisted for the trans-Pennine franchise on "best value" grounds while its existing franchise was such a mess it needed a £58m temporary bail-out.

SRA boss Richard Bowker wrote: "We have to... rediscover how to train, manage and motivate our people so that the team works together like an efficient machine." Perhaps that's why he told SRA staff to "fit in or fuck off" and backed South West Trains management in a strike triggered by wrongful demotion of a union-activist driver (*Eye* 1065). Morale among guards, drivers and white-collar staff in northern England has plummeted because the SRA blocked pay rises without being involved in negotiations, leading to interminable strikes.

"I want to see fewer accountants, fewer lawyers and fewer consultants," wrote Bowker (an accountant) in his foreword. Since then he has appointed a consultant, Jim Steer, to the second most influential post at the SRA, where 15 "interim managers" (aka consultants) now work full-time.

A year ago Bowker's vision was of a railway that was safe, reliable and value for money, "irrespective of which part of the country one happens to live in", and where investment on routes into London "should not divert funds from regional networks". Today his vision is of major cuts in regions (3,500 services a day reportedly under threat).

"I will champion the cause of this industry and its people at every available opportunity. I will make the case for rail and for the necessary investment," he proclaimed. The first multi-modal transport studies were a golden opportunity for the SRA to press for extra funding. Instead it rubbished the studies' rail proposals because, though they made sense as part of an integrated package, the "rail element does not stack up" when taken in isolation. The upshot? £3bn extra for new roads suggested in the studies, nil for the heavy-rail schemes.

Development of major projects would gather pace, the SRA predicted... shortly before Thameslink 2000 and London Cross-rail receded even further. Projects would be delivered by special-purpose vehicles... but none of these unwieldy consortia has been set up. Government proposed most infrastructure investment be paid for by passengers "only once it is in use, rather than up-front", said the SRA — six months before stating in a consultation on further price rises: "One option is to change our fares policy to provide an increased stream of revenue for reinvestment across the whole network."

The plan also promised more transparency on infrastructure spending. So when the SRA ruled out electrification in Sussex as it would cost nearly six times more than an experienced contractor's estimate, rail watchdogs asked how the SRA arrived at that figure. They were told transparency would serve no useful purpose (*Eye* 1067).

A new 10-year strategy is due this month. It will bear little relation to last year's but should at least provide a clear direction for at least the next few weeks.

'Dr B. Ching'

Number crunching

-50%

■ Cut in strategic rail authority bureaucrats promised by SRA boss Richard Bowker in 2001

+100%

■ Increase in SRA bureaucrats planned by Bowker 2001-03

DOING THE ROUNDS

A KEY pledge for "new" Labour's new NHS was to enable patients to move freely around the system to get the treatment they need. If the experience of Domenic Gallego is anything to go on, you can't even move from one neighbouring hospital to another.

On 7 December Mr Gallego was admitted to Bristol's Frenchay hospital with a doubly fractured lower leg. He was told this would require the insertion of a longitudinal nail, which is generally performed as soon as the patient's condition will allow. The otherwise fit Mr Gallego was then told an external fixating frame might also be needed, and that the only surgeons able to do this were at the notoriously bed-sparse Bristol Royal Infirmary. He was placed in a long leg plaster and told he would be transferred the following day.

On Wednesday 18th, just 11 days later, he was told by his registrar that an external frame wouldn't be needed and the operation would take place at Frenchay the following day. This was then retracted and he was advised that a BRI frame specialist called Livingstone was awaiting him. Finally, after 15 days' languishing in Frenchay (at £400 a day to the taxpayer) he was transferred to the BRI, an experience he described as "unbelievably filthy" and "akin to Soviet Russia".

His leg was nailed, without the need of a frame, on 22 December and he was promptly discharged to Gloucester for physiotherapy. Or at least he would have been if his appointment hadn't erroneously been made back at the BRI.

Non-Complaint of the Year

AN obstetrician from Cardiff has written to the *Eye* with what he believes is the most absurd complaint ever. "At a recent delivery, I identified the risk of shoulder dystocia (an obstetric emergency when the baby's shoulders get stuck, risking death from asphyxia). Having just been on my advanced life saving in obstetrics course, I was able to manage the emergency in exemplary fashion. The delivery was very difficult but the baby was delivered unharmed and the mother was undamaged save for an episiotomy. It was one of those all too rare occasions when you feel you really made a difference.

"A few days later I was phoned by a manager desperate to catch me before I went on leave. I had to reply to a complaint made by the mother in writing and within 48 hours to comply with the trust guidelines on managing complaints. All the other staff, five of them, mentioned in the complaint also had to write a statement. Someone must have spent the best part of a day collating them all and drafting a response for the chief executive to sign. The charge made against me was that the mother felt 'I sweated too much when delivering her baby'. This speaks volumes about vexatious patients seeking a pay off with public money and the crass, unthinking knee-jerk absurdity of a lot of NHS management policies. Please do not publish my name and address for obvious reasons."

● DR MIKE FINNEGAN, clinical director of medicine at Fairfield General Hospital, Bury, has written an illuminating letter to Chris Appleby, Pennine Acute Hospital Trust chief executive. "I am warning you now that it is my belief that Fairfield Hospital is very close to collapsing as a functional unit. Staffing levels are dangerously low and unless you take radical decisions very soon something dreadful will happen. I have thought long and hard before writing this letter and I write it out of a great sense of concern for Fairfield Hospital, its staff and the patients it attempts to serve."

The new Pennine trust replaced the old Bury, North Manchester and Rochdale trusts, costing the NHS £1.5m for just three chief executive severance packages. The final bill for winding up the trusts will be £4m, which is partly why Fairfield hospital is feeling the pinch.

M.D.

off your trolley

REEVE & WAY

COME ON, JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE ON A TROLLEY DOESN'T MEAN YOU CAN'T EXERCISE...
IT'S IMPORTANT TO GET THE CIRCULATION GOING AND GET OUT OF THE BED...
SO SOMEONE ELSE CAN USE IT FOR A WHILE
48 HOURS NO SLEEP... BLEEPER GOING... JUST SNATCH 5 MINUTESZZZ...

ROTTEN BOROUGHS

PICTURE OF INNOCENCE

WHEN chief executive John Foster (*Eyes passim*) left Middlesbrough council for Wakefield before Christmas, a collection raised just £69. It enabled a cheap watch to be presented at a sparsely-attended leaving do.

Foster, who is believed to have left because the Boro' wasn't big enough for both his ego and that of the town's new mayor, Ray "Robocop" Mallon, was somewhat disappointed at this measly gift. He had taken a shine to a painting from the council's art collection by local artist Andrew Gifford, which hung in his office, and had repeatedly asked if he could take it with him. As the picture is estimated to be worth around £7,500, the answer was no.

After Foster's departure, however, it was noticed that the painting was missing. Several strong letters and phone calls were necessary before it was retrieved from Foster's home, where he insisted it had been taken as a "joke".

Wakefield council staff are advised to secure all fixtures and fittings – unless they share their new boss's sense of humour.

TORTURE ON TYNE

NORTH TYNESIDE council's £34m PFI schools contract with Kajima, the Japanese construction corporation with close links to Burma's vicious military regime (*Eyes passim*), was finally signed just before Christmas.

It was nodded through at a special early morning meeting held at short notice to try to minimise embarrassing protests from human rights activists and former prisoners of war. They do so go on about the fact that the company ran a slave mine in Japan during the second world war at which half the 900 forced labourers died within a year.

Campaigners had hoped the council's new Tory elected mayor Chris Morgan would have the bottle to reverse the former Labour administration's award of "preferred bidder" status to Kajima, but no such luck. He hid behind a letter sent by John Prescott to Lib-Dem MP Jenny Tonge after she complained about Kajima's unsavoury Burmese connections. Prescott said EU rules and the government's own competition act "require local authorities to exclude from the contracting process consideration of certain 'non-commercial' matters". In other words, you can't rule out a contractor just because it does business with fascists and torturers. Heaven forbid!

BEECHAM'S POWDER

MYSTERY surrounds the visit of Local Government Association supremo Sir Jeremy Beecham to Hull to meet Cllr Colin Inglis, leader of the city council's opposition Labour group.

The ruling Lib Dems, who gained control in May, had no idea Beecham was in Hull until someone spotted him with Inglis in the town hall. The LGA says Beecham was there on "Labour group business" (he heads the Labour group at the LGA) but what that business was is apparently a secret.

It is possible his visit was linked to a letter sent by Inglis to the council's chief executive, Jim Brooks, warning him that his position, and that of his senior officers, would be "reviewed" if Labour was returned to power at the next elections. Alarmed officers took this as a threat: cooperate too closely with the ruling Lib Dems and you might be kicked out should Labour get back in.

A damning corporate governance report from the audit commission in July slated the running of the council and said it had found evidence of members bullying officers. The report was based on an inspection in March, when Labour was still in power.

The belief in Hull is that someone right at the top of the Labour party asked Beecham to go oop north, give Inglis a quiet bollocking… and tell him to shut up before he does any more damage to the party's image.

MIAMI VICE

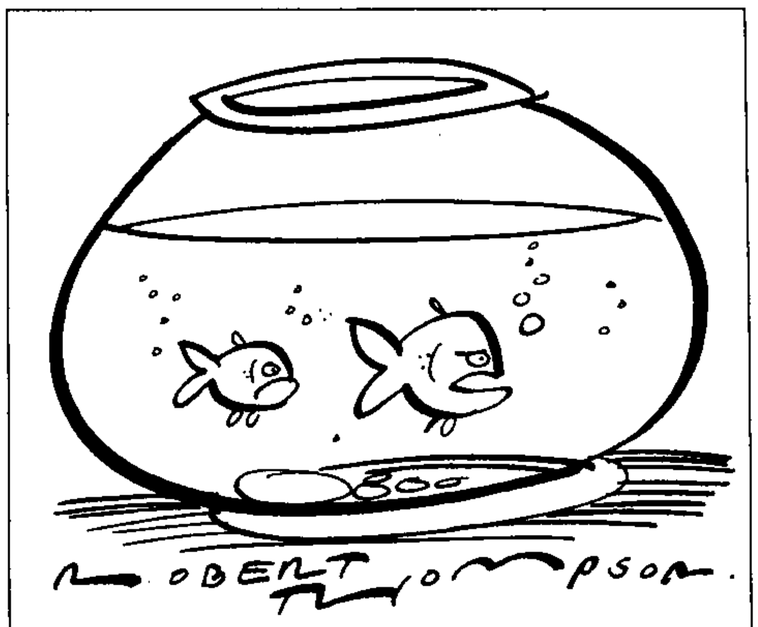
HANDBAGS are flying in Skidrow-on-Sea as councillors and officers row over whose fault it was that Labour Brighton and Hove wasted £150,000 of public money last year on its doomed bid to become "European city of culture" (*Eyes passim*).

The campaign's cheerleader was former culture supremo Cllr Ian Duncan, who was allowed to make himself and B&H look ridiculous while council leader Ken Bodfish and deputy Jackie Lythell reckoned the bid was pretty hopeless.

Matters weren't helped in the eyes of the judges by DJ Fatboy Slim fans' mass urination in the refurbished Dome auditorium and by the tons of broken glass at Fatboy's notoriously overcrowded "party" on the beach, at which it was a miracle only one person died. Skidrow did not even reach the shortlist. (It is a measure of the stupidity of the people who run Brighton that Fatboy and his missus Zoe Ball are "cultural" assets in the first place.)

A humiliated Duncan claimed it had all gone wrong because Sarah Tanburn, the officer in charge of culture and regeneration, had not put her heart into it. She was sacked along with the head of city services, Paul Hart. Bodfish, however, had a twinge of conscience and sacked Duncan as culture councillor — at which Duncan announced that he was taking his ball home and not standing again for election in May.

Meanwhile, after winning "Philistines of the Year" in the 2002 Rotten Boroughs awards, B&H is now "seriously considering" a proposal that it should be twinned with Miami Beach. The idea is backed by the usual representatives of Brighton "culture" such as, er, Fatboy Slim. "The cities have so much in common," say campaigners for the link. Hm. Bad taste, flash jewellery, architectural vandalism, drugs, homelessness, prostitution, corruption, organised crime. See what you mean. Go for it, Skidrow!



"Follow me – this situation calls for strong leadership"

EDUCASHUN NEWS

PARENTS and teachers feeling nervous about the transfer of Walsall's education department to arms company Serco last week were reassured by the council that all was for the good.

The £100m deal was part of the council's four-year plan to turn itself into a "showcase local authority" after coming in the bottom 12 in the audit commission's league table of larger councils' performance before Christmas. Director of education Terry Redmayne said: "The expanded contract will constitute a significant step forwards on the road to delivering excellence in education in the borough."

Four years was also quoted as the time it would take Serco to turn around Bradford's struggling schools when it took them over in September 2001 at the start of a 10-year, £360m contract. Alas, in its first year in charge Serco missed 47 of its 52 targets across a range of indicators including exam results, failing schools and truancy rates. The company has now admitted its targets are unrealistic and has applied to have some of them reduced, along with the hefty bonus payments it could have expected for achieving them. The company managed to earn just £8,450 out of a possible £870,000 in potential bonuses in its first year.

Bradford's Liberal Democrat leader Jeanette Sunderland, who pushed hard for the contract in the first place and declared that the company would be fired if it did not achieve all its goals, has predictably backed off. "I don't think [that would be] a helpful and constructive way to take this matter forward," she now says.

While local politicians are expected to try to save face when things go wrong, what is baffling is the government's continued obsession with talking up PPPs in the education sector. In the same week that Serco's failure in Bradford was laid bare, schools minister David Miliband said with a straight face that the company's deal in Walsall would enable it "to deliver the substantial improvements required" and "make an important contribution to the authority's corporate recovery programme".

IT'S GRIM UP NORTH LONDON

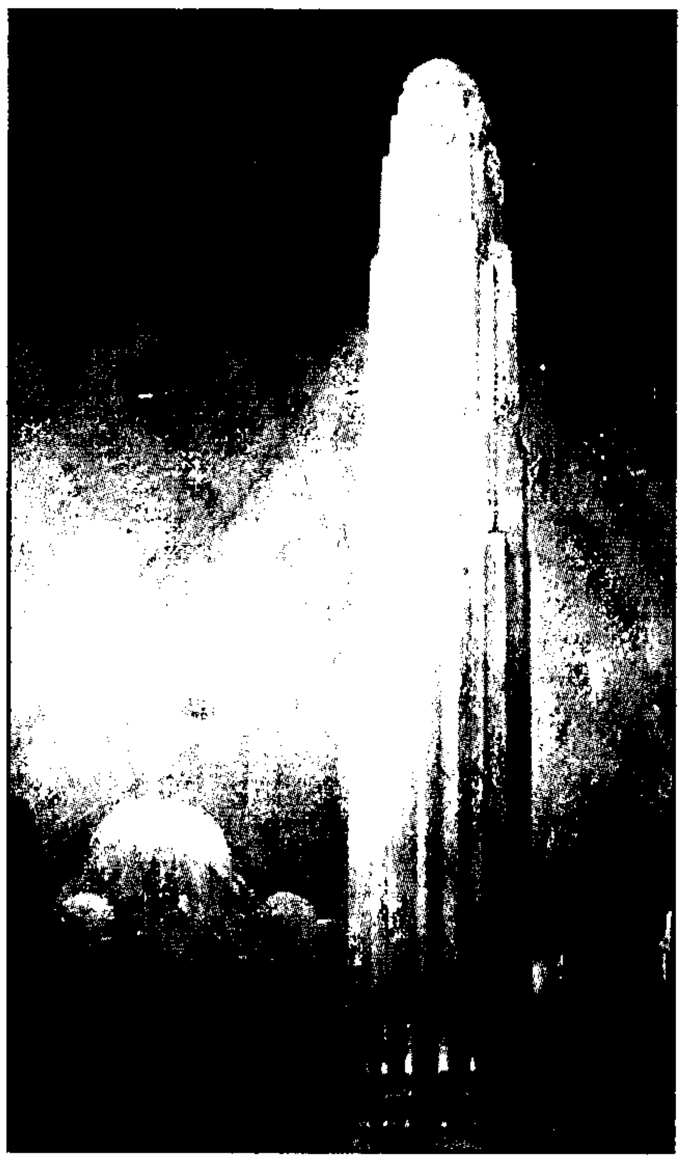
KNIFE & PACKER

HI GUYS, HOW WAS YOUR LITERARY NEW YEAR IN EDINBURGH?
DID YOU DISCOVER THE NEW TOWN OF WALTER SCOTT? THE OLD TOWN OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON?
UNFORTUNATELY WE TOOK A WRONG TURN... INTO THE ESTATES OF IRVINE WELSH

NOOKS and CORNERS

THERE is at least one thing on which "new" Labour, mayor of London Ken Livingstone and the City Corporation agree: skyscrapers are *sexy*. If only half the current applications to build high are approved, London will soon look like Detroit or Atlanta.

To my dismay, the commission of English Heritage recently decided *not* to oppose construction of a 50-storey office tower near the Tower of London. Designed by Nicholas Grimshaw – another of those "High Tec" architects with a knighthood – for developer Minerva, this will be 712ft (217m) high: taller than both the former Nat West Tower and My Lord Foster's so-called "Gherkin" which is now rising on the site of the poor old Baltic Exchange.



Although English Heritage's officers and its London advisory committee concluded that the Minerva Tower would have a "severe and unacceptable" impact on the Tower of London (a view shared by Historic Royal Palaces, which looks after the venerable monument), those in charge of English Heritage were reluctant to ask John Prescott to hold a public inquiry into the Minerva proposal.

This is understandable to a degree. They know the government cares little for anything historic, let alone listed; and, more to the point, they know that the last time EH challenged a skyscraper in the City, it ended in defeat. (This was the public inquiry a year ago into the 43-storey Heron Tower in Bishopsgate, which EH opposed because of the damage which will be done to views of St Paul's Cathedral while calling for a proper tall buildings policy for London.)

But the problem English Heritage now faces is the charge of inconsistency. And this, alas, is all its own fault. Under the chairmanship of Sir Jocelyn Stevens, it foolishly acquiesced in the unnecessary and scandalous demolition of the listed Baltic Exchange after it was damaged by an IRA bomb and welcomed the replacement Foster tower for Swiss Ré. Now, when English Heritage continues very properly to oppose the 60-storey London Bridge Tower by Renzo Piano — which the current chairman, Sir Neil Cossons, has described as "a stake through the heart of London" — its case will be further undermined by the organisation's apparent approval by default of the wretched Minerva Tower.

English Heritage will be more weakened by defeatism than by sticking to its guns. There is also public opinion, after all, which may not take kindly to the continuing Americanisation of our cities and is certainly not impressed by the cynical posturing of architects. Above all, when it comes to the threat from the tall buildings lobby, we need English Heritage to fight for us.

My illustration does not show Grimshaw's "four open books" design but a skyscraper fantasy of 1929 by American Hugh Ferris. It shows how the idea of erecting a big show-off skyscraper is dated as well as being an adolescent and purely masculine gesture.

THE Haie at Newton-on-Severn is a listed 19th century country house now divided into apartments. It was bought 20 years ago by a developer, H.E. Coombs, who applied to create a caravan and holiday chalet park in the grounds.

Planning permission was refused by the local authority in January 1984 but granted the following June, subject to many conditions. In the event nothing was done and in 1987 the big house was converted instead. But now, years later, some of the woodland has been sold to another developer who has cut down trees (illegally) as he hopes to build 20 chalets as permanent residences under the original planning consent (which ought long ago to have lapsed), even though the mile-long drive to the house has never been metalled as required.

Local residents are cross about this and complained to Forest of Dean district council, which promised a full report on planning consents at The Haie to be discussed at a full council meeting last November. However, when the report arrived parts were said to be so, um, sensitive they were withheld from councillors and the public.

It emerges that no written consent for Mr Coombs to proceed with building work can be found. Even so, despite admitting that "mistakes" have been made, the council feels unable to prevent the current development because of the doctrine of "estoppel". Forest of Dean owes everyone an explanation.

'Piloti'

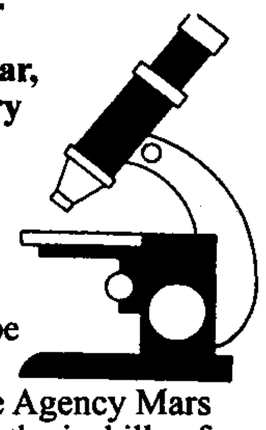
I-SPY

Arundel

Submitted by Dr Alan L. Mackay. £10 paid for similar submissions.

(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)

UNDER THE MICROSCOPE



AROUND this time next year, all being well, an extraordinary British triumph will unfold several hundred million miles away.

After a long and arduous voyage which began in Milton Keynes, the Beagle 2 Mars probe will detach itself from its mothership, the European Space Agency Mars Express, and parachute down to the icehills of Isidis, just north of the Martian equator.

After bouncing around for awhile on its inflated airbags, Beagle 2 (named after the ship in which Darwin sailed round the world) will open like a Swiss pocketwatch, unfurling antennae and cameras. Then it will despatch the Mole, a bizarre, snakelike tunnelling thing that will peer under rocks and sniff around for life. The whole caboodle cost a mere £30m or so, is the size of a wheelbarrow and could do what three decades of billion-dollar American and Russian probes have failed to do: answer the question of whether there was a second Genesis in the solar system.

It all sounds incredible… and it is. A British space probe! That could discover life on Mars! Britain doesn't do space, do we? Why haven't we heard of this wondrous thing? Surely this is just wishful thinking… another HOTOL, the brilliant British spaceplane which would have knocked the ponderous and expensive Shuttle into a cocked hat had anyone had the foresight to build it.

Well, maybe you have heard of Beagle 2, but most likely you haven't. And if you have, you probably think it is American. Or French. Or that it is many years away. In fact it is starting to creep into the public consciousness – there was a cartoon featuring it in the *Eye* a few weeks back – but not noisily so. And the reason for this is simple. The NASA-obsessed British media have almost totally ignored Beagle up until now.

This is despite the impressive efforts of its inventor, the Open University's Colin Pillinger, a man whose flamboyant muttonchops and west-country burr seem at odds with a brain the size of a planet. Pillinger has moved heaven and earth to get this thing off the ground, shaming the government to hand over £5m when it looked like floundering, and enticing artists and popstars to get in on the project. Beagle 2 launches on 23 May. Sorry to be annoyingly unscathing about this, but it deserves our support.

● Back to scepticism… and the cloning codswallop. The Raelians, who are too demented to be worthy of much discussion, claim they have cloned a baby as part of their project to create immortality or whatever. This is nonsense. They haven't done it and nor will they. They don't have the money or the skills, despite conning thousands out of simple-minded people who want to recreate their dead children.

The Raelians are led by Rael, a former motor racing hack, who believes he was abducted by aliens to lead humanity. What is it about sports journalists and bizarre beliefs? Remember poor David Icke, the ex-snooker commentator? He believes the queen mother was an alien lizard.

'Boffin'

YOUNG BRITISH ARTISTS BY BIRCH

This is outrageous! I'm ringing the producer in person!
CHINESE ARTIST EATS DEAD BABY ON CHANNEL 4! "BEIJING SWINGS"
It's true, I'm afraid-he's definitely Chinese, not British.
That's grotesque!
CHINESE ARTIST

DOWN ON THE FARM

BRITAIN's 65,000-odd surviving sheep farmers had another wonderful Christmas present this year from their friends in Brussels. As usual the role of Santa was played by the department for the elimination of farming and rural affairs (Defra) — in this case its livestock identification branch in Page Street, London.

Just before Christmas farmers received a letter saying it had been "agreed" as part of a new "package of controls on livestock movements" that, as from 1 February 2003, they must ear-tag all "newborn lambs and kids". The tags must contain an "origin mark" and a "unique individual identification number ie UK 654321 000001". Each time the flock loses a lamb, its number must be recorded so that Defra and its friends in Brussels can keep an exact check on the number of sheep there are.

What makes this such a brilliant idea is that it is hard enough trying to stick metal or plastic tags in the ears of full-grown ewes. The animals' ears are so easily torn that, apart from it being painful for the animals, roughly 20 percent of tags are lost each year as sheep scratch their heads along hedges or fences in an effort to remove them. But if farmers must now force a metal pin through the ear of a baby lamb as soon as it is born, and may be fighting for life, the problems will be greater still.

The nightmare will become even worse when, as often happens, a young lamb dies in its first weeks of life. At least if the farmer sees a lamb lying in a field, he will soon be able to identify which has died. But if, as is likely, it soon disappears, removed by one of those cuddly foxes "new" Labour is so keen on, he will have to round up his entire flock to check which sheep are missing.

This will present problems enough for the lowland farmer, whose sheep may be scattered over many fields (how will he know lambs have gone missing unless he goes out to count them each day?) For the hill farmers of Wales, Dartmoor or the north of England, with sheep scattered over vast areas of moorland or mountainside, to obey the new law will literally be impossible. Yet any farmer caught out by the new eartag inspectorate not having recorded the number of every animal that dies will be guilty of a criminal offence, liable to a fine of up to £5,000 or imprisonment.

More generous-minded farmers suspect this unworkable new law could only have been drafted by officials sitting in cosy offices who have never seen a sheep in their lives. Otherwise they could not have suggested something so cruel to the animals. But others suspect that those officials in Brussels and Page Street know perfectly well that the impossibility of complying with this new law is really the point of introducing it.

For a long time they have wanted to see sheep numbers in Britain cut drastically to reduce the money paid out each year in subsidies. Having the chance to kill more than eight million healthy sheep and lambs during the foot-and-mouth crisis was a welcome start. But unfortunately the sheep just kept on breeding. So by forcing thousands more sheep farmers out of business, the new regulation will be just what the doctor ordered.

'Muckspreader'

Letters

Private Eye

Holden the front page

Sir,

I think you have missed the point with your latest cover. Isn't that Les Dennis hiding behind George? Perhaps Mr Bush is planning to be the ultimate Big Brother in the next series.

Yours,
TOM BARNARD,

Via email.

Sir,

Congratulations on finding such a good picture of Hugo Brunner, Lord Lieutenant for Oxfordshire, in full uniform for your front cover issue 1070.

Who is the other somewhat underdressed character with the weird hand gesture?

Yours faithfully,
DAVID HARVEY,

Witney, Oxon.

Light under a Bushell?

Sir,

I'm only prepared to stand for mayor of London (1070) if Miss Dynamite agrees to be my running mate.

Yours faithfully,
GARRY BUSHELL,

Via email.

Independence daze

Sir,

I was truly delighted to read that the Eye has continued its honourable tradition of piss-poor reporting by unquestioningly regurgitating a BNP press release about our very own Gary [sic] Bushell (Eye 1070, 27/12/02). As any fule kno', Gary was beaten up by BNP thugs for being a "race traitor" after they published his home address in their in-house magazine. The BNP's sudden pro-Bushell conversion springs from a fear that he will return the favour by beating the crap out of them in the mayoral elections.

All this depends, of course, on Gary actually being selected as our candidate in late January, a point which you seem to have failed to grasp. A call to our press office may have cleared that up, but after all, why let facts interfere with a story? Whoever we select, they will prove that it is possible to support the UK without supporting the far-right.

We continue to fight against racism in all its forms. Any members who express extreme, anti-immigrant, facist views are now given the telephone number of David Blunkett and encouraged to join the Labour party.

Yours festively,
MARK CROUCHER,

UK Independence Party National Press Officer.

Recycling news

Sir,

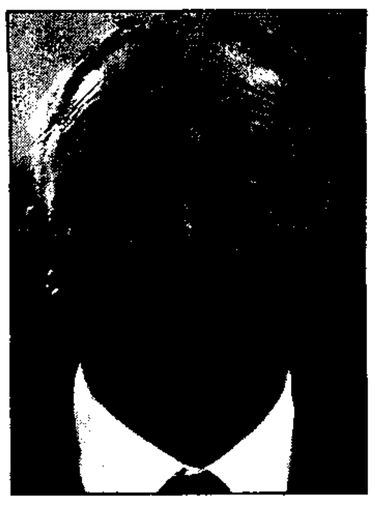
The report in HP Sauce (1069) of an alleged incident involving a London taxi driver and Labour MP Bob Marshall-Andrews QC as they approached Heathrow airport the previous week sounded familiar. I recall hearing the same tale three months previously, except that the person who told the story against himself on that occasion was England's 1966 World Cup hero Sir Geoff Hurst. Did both incidents happen, or is two-jobs Marshall-Andrews recycling somebody else's joke as his own?

Yours sincerely,
BOB RUSSELL,
Lib-Dem MP for Colchester,

House of Commons.

Lookalike

Ken



"Goon"

Sir,

I have noticed an uncanny resemblance between Ken Livingstone, mayor of London, and one of the mayor of South Park's "goons". Are they by any chance related?

K. CONNELL,

Camberley, Surrey.

● *Would readers kindly stop submitting lookalike photographs of the new Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr Rowan Williams, and police suspect Mr Tony Hardy. It's not clever and it's not funny. Ed.*

Off his trolley?

Sir,

It is always a little galling to find beneath M.D.'s consistently incisive and informative column the cartoon strip by Reeve and Way. The only gag seems to be that the NHS would be a lot better off if doctors played less golf.

The only NHS employees I know who play golf are porters these days, which may be one reason I can never find one in a hurry. Which is why, contrary to the scenario portrayed recently, I am constantly pushing patients on trolleys around various bits of the hospital. (In truth it has less to do with golf, and more to do with the fact our department has been trying to get its own dedicated porter for years. Too expensive apparently.)

The only thing that keeps me going is the knowledge that I have not been formally trained in "lifting and handling techniques", so there's always a hope I might put my back out and get a big fat settlement from my employers.

Yours,
DR ED WALKER,

West Yorkshire.

Hooked at last

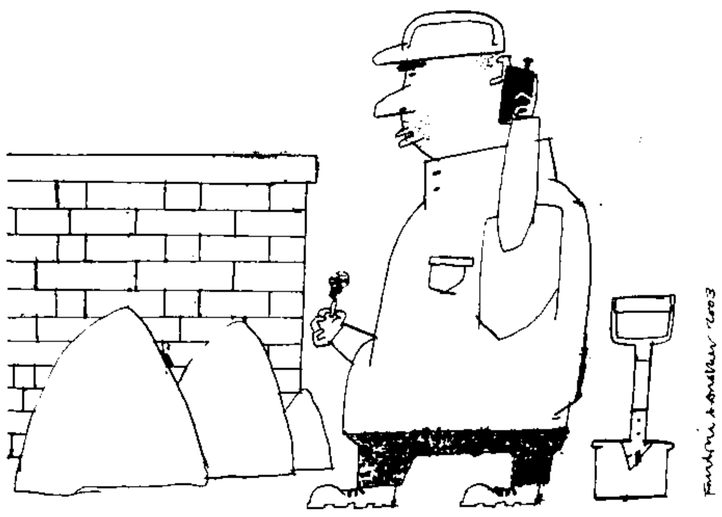
Sir,

I see that the media – ok The Daily Mail – have eventually got hold of your long-running story on the Scottish salmon industry. So how many years did that take them?

Regards,
SIMON A.C. BILL,

Via email.

Scenes You Seldom See



"Hello, it's the builder. Just to let you know, we've finished the job on time and it will cost you three grand less than the estimate"

Blast from the past

Sir,

My attention has been drawn to an article in , HP Sauce in the last Private Eye. I must confess that to my eternal shame, I have not read your publication since my occasional appearance in "Merkeyside" in the lunatic days of Derek Hatton and Militant Tendency in the 1980s.

A number of my friends and colleagues (and others far less charitable) have gained the impression, from your article, that I somehow manipulated "The System" to retire early with a medically enhanced pension in order that I could take up pre-arranged private employment elsewhere. As a consequence of the manner in which this "information" was presented, there are those who call my position as Chairman of a Fire Authority into question. I write now to correct the "story" that I can only assume was fed, with malice aforethought, to the author of the article.

After 31 years' fire service and as a consequence of severe, crippling arthritis brought on by that and my previous seven years of army service (infantry) including active service in Korea, I was forced, at the unusually early age of 55, to undergo a knee replacement operation. (I feel sure that you and your informants will admit that this is a difficult medical condition to fake). Against my wish to remain in post, vociferously expressed to the brigade's doctor, and to the chairman of my fire authority one Derek Hatton, I was compulsorily retired in 1988. As I had already completed my full pensionable service (30 years) I neither sought nor received any enhancement to the pension that I had contributed to throughout my service.

I had no employment in train when I was forced to retire as unfit and my subsequent employment in Melksham, Wiltshire (at a salary roughly equating to that currently enjoyed by the lowest grade of fireman), came about by chance, as I sought some means of occupying myself during my unexpected, enforced and unwanted sentence to unemployment.

Yours sincerely,
JERRY WILLMOTT,
Via email.

The Great Bore

Sir,

As a pedant, which is what people who don't know something call people who do, I should like to point out an inaccuracy in RR's cartoon based on one of the many games of football played in No Man's Land during the Great War.

German troops wore not one but two circular cockades on the front of the field cap (Feldmütze), one representing Imperial Germany and the other the state, or Land. On the spiked helmet (Pikelhaubè) only the regimental number was displayed on the front, the cockades being situated on either side.

Get a grip.

JAMES REEVE,
Via email.

Music therapy?

Sir,

The conductor of the Boston Philharmonic Orchestra (Florida Sum, In The Back, Eye 1070) is no newcomer to NHS managerial junkets. In 2001 his address to the UK conference of the NHS Confederation of Managers was enthusiastically received, although as a musician from a country which itself has no NHS he might seem less than ideally placed to comment on such matters. Perhaps, however, Mr Zander's spirited rendition of the March to the Scaffold in Berlioz's Symphonie Fantastique rings a bell with administrators facing the chaos imposed by New Labour's creeping privatisation of their service.

Yours faithfully,
DR BOB HEYS,
Halifax.

Agog-magog

Sir,

What a load of cock and bull! The Gogmagogs are fab. I saw them play at the Edinburgh Festival and in London, both at the Purcell Room and at the Lyric Theatre in Hammersmith. At times their performances were sublime, full of humour, lightheartedness and extraordinary skill.

*Like Tony Brown, I found Troy Town a bit confusing. I think the cow with the big penis was a minotaur – hence the name of the production. As far as I can remember, it was a pinkish colour, with big blue spots. But the lights **were** a bit dim...*

Yours sincerely,
JASON GATHORNE-HARDY,
Saxmundham, Suffolk.

Lookalike

Eminem

Mother Teresa

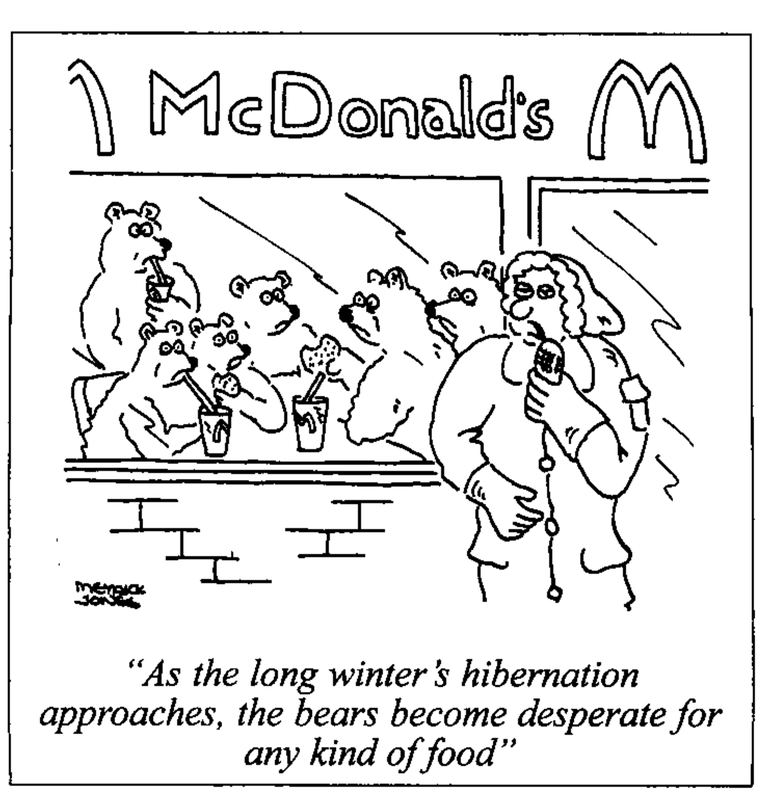
Sir,

Has anybody noticed the resemblance between the soon to be sainted Mother Teresa of Calcutta and bad boy of rap Eminem?

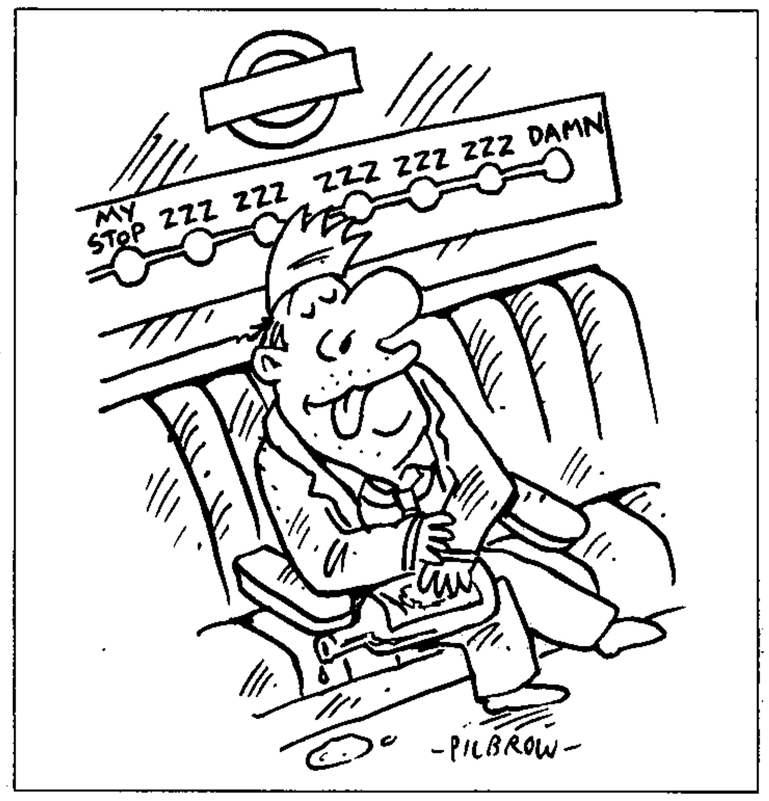
Both are/were considered to be voices for the underprivileged but until now only one of them has been credited with performing miracles.

I suspect they are related and think we should be told.

ENA B. MAXWELL,
Uganda House, Neasden.



"As the long winter's hibernation approaches, the bears become desperate for any kind of food"



Return to sender?

Sir,

I was initially surprised to see a second "Letter from Israel" so soon after your last one, without any such "Letter" in the meantime exposing the (far greater corruption and brutality of the) PA. But then I remembered that the PA condemns as "Zionist collaborators" any brave souls attempting to expose it and often summarily hangs them in the street (whereas Israel enjoys freedom of speech, a free press, and the only true democracy in the Middle East). For more details, including a list of all the journalists murdered by the PLO, I can thoroughly recommend the excellent, and fully documented, book Philistine by Ramon Bennett.

I must say that I found this "Letter from Israel", like the previous one, to be very misleading. For example, the statistics of those killed on each side would tell a very different story if they were expressed in terms of non-combatants.

The Letter subsequently mentions Bethlehem (as do the superb cartoons on pages 1, 5, 10, 11, 15 and 24). Considering that this reference appeared in the Christmas edition of the Eye, would it be TOO politically incorrect to observe that Bethlehem was part of Israel at the time of Christ – and that Jesus was a Jew?

Yours Gentily,
DUSTY PETERSON,
Via email.

Godalming Sainsbury's manager Mark Salmon apologised to customers for the enforced closure.

"It was the kind of one-off incident that, unfortunately, happens from time to time," he said.

Surrey Advertiser

Sir,

What next from your respected organ? Your Letter From Israel (1069) was completely riddled with accuracies. The Israeli reserve soldiers (refuseniks) refusing to serve in the occupied territories recently talked at one of our peace meetings. Even they were surprised at the hostility from British Jewish leaders, some of the Jewish press and many of the Jewish population here. However, the tide is turning with many ageing socialists and young realists, a viable and valuable peace lobby is becoming more established here in Britain.

I am still shocked by the accuracies of your report and am seriously considering doubling my purchases of your humble organ.

Yours, in peace,
JOHNNY WALLMAN,
Chairman, Just Peace Now (NW England),
just_peace_now@hotmail.com

Deadly statistics

Sir,

I think that even Muckspreader might have fallen for some questionable statistics as far as the overall vCJD death count. He states the number of deaths so far this year as 15 but a quick look at the governments own website (www.doh.gov.uk/cjd/cjd-stat.htm) will show that as of 2 December 2002 no fewer than nine of those 15 deaths are "Deaths from probable vCJD (without neuropathological confirmation)", indeed 25 of the total 119 deaths are unconfirmed. Whilst this is a horrible tragic disease and possibly all these deaths are the result of vCJD, when the single death awaiting confirmation is also excluded a total of four deaths this year are definitely the result of vCJD. If such a loose interpretation of suspicious deaths were decreed to be murder or suicide or accidental without proper review but only for the convenience of the counters, it would be held up to scorn.

Yours,
RICK BRYANT,

Exeter.

"I got one this small"

Sir,

I am usually an admirer of Muckspreader, but was a little disappointed by the piece on ESAs in the crofting areas of Scotland on 29 November. In actual fact, the Environmental Area Schemes have been hugely valued by crofters in the Highlands and Islands, the sector of agriculture which overall has been most neglected by the Common Agricultural Policy, as interpreted by the UK government.

Further, it takes a very selective reading of the Macaulay Institute report to suggest that the scheme is a failure. In fact, most of the work in the report covers a two-year period, and the authors make it absolutely clear that they would not expect much change in a cold, wet, environment like heather moorland over that period.

I don't know who Ian Mitchell and Kirsty MacLeod are actually writing in support of: it certainly isn't us crofters.

Yours sincerely,
DREW RATTER,

Shetland.

SK OK

Sir,

I know you have a thingy in your bonnet about UK arms sales to dodgy regimes, but it is noticeable that the countries you disapprovingly call "dictatorships" in Call to Arms (Eye 1070) (Brunei, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia and UAE) and those referred to as "human rights grey areas" (Malaysia, Singapore, Turkey, South Korea) are all typically unaggressive, even to their own citizens. In contrast many of the others named – India, Australia, USA – and the UK itself have been self-righteously belligerent and none too fussy about preserving human rights.

Never mind the MoD's list – it's time to update yours.

Regards,
GEORGE TEDBURY,

Via email.

Sir,

Although I admire your professionalism and objectivity in investigative journalism, I found it's extremely unfair of you to classify South Korea (SK) under "Human Rights Grey Areas" (Calls to Arms, HP Sauce 1070).

Even though SK does not have a flattering historical human rights record, it has made a considerable progress over the last 10 years or so: its citizens now democratically elect the president and are able to express their opinions through any media they wish, ranging from far-left to far-right. Unlike Malaysia, SK citizens can demonstrate whenever/wherever they wish as long as it's not violent (eg the recent anti-US candle light marches and pro-US support demonstration calling for air-raiding North Korea's suspected nuclear arsenal). Unlike Singapore, SK citizens are allowed to make any criticism of the government or its members (eg all the articles appearing in national newspapers accusing the president of being senile) without fearing any reprisals (some of the editors who made such remarks in the past are now in the cabinet).

Yours sincerely,
YOON CHUNG,

Via email.

Cash on demand

Sir,

Re: Special Educational Needs. Perhaps council taxpayers at large should be relieved at the efforts of "cash-strapped local authorities" to limit this further burden upon them, on top of so many which it would be politically incorrect to mention!

This sounds like yet another open-ended commitment, with implications also for the NHS, which, in their lack of transparency, bedevil public financing, another aspect of the "compensation culture", and the endless wail for "more resources" for whatever axe the particular pleader is grinding. The country seems to be becoming one vast would-be blank cheque on the demand side. Will the supply of stealth taxes run out?

Yours faithfully,
L.G. HOLT,

Chislehurst, Kent.

Brought to Bookworm

Sir,

Before Bookworm becomes the subject of a future Hackwatch probe, I'd just like to point out some apparent discrepancies in his/her attitude towards the "current malaise in Australian fiction". It may be true that it suffers from a lack of engagement with the contemporary and a navel-gazing obsession with the past (why in any case is an interest in the past navel-gazing? Surely it's the opposite?) But then in Bookworm's treatment of Scottish fiction the opposite seems to be the case: s/he laments its relentless obsession with the modern and slick (or should that be sick?), and the comparative neglect of old stagers like Allan Massie who, er, writes historical fiction and whose best works have been set during, er, the Second World War. There's no pleasing some people,

NEIL HARGRAVES,

Edinburgh.

One promotion for BA's first-class "flying beds" urged "don't stand for sleepless nights". Another said sleep deprivation caused "memory loss, muddled thinking, visual impairment and memory loss".
Grauniad

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"You felt this was the sort of game that needed a goal to break the deadlock."
RON JONES, Radio 5 Live
(Dominic Birch)

"McCullum dispatched the bails to all four corners of the hemisphere."
Radio Sport New Zealand
(David Bees)

"... 1-0 is not a winning score, by any means..."
IAN HALL, BBC Radio Derby
(Mike Hudson)

"He seems to be taking his time, but his brain must be going ten to the dozen."
HAZEL IRVINE, BBC
(Terry Thomas)

"It's old... older than when Jonah was in the Ark"
SIMON BATES, ClassicFM
(Phil Dite)

HOM SAP

AUSTIN

Letter from **South Africa**
from Our Own Correspondent

AT the ANC's 51st conference before Christmas our leader Thabo Mbeki asserted his total grip on the party. So why does he look so uncomfortable? Simple. Like your Mr Blair, who has no effective official opposition, Thabo can run the country like a one-party state. He only has to fret, for the time being anyway, about his own comrades.

Our biggest political clash now is the wily guerrilla campaign former president Nelson Mandela is conducting against his successor. At the conference Nelson arrived near the end of Mbeki's two-hour address and delegates leapt to their feet in the sort of rip-roaring acclaim Mbeki can only dream about. Thabo just fiddled with his notes and looked furious.

Party dissidents have privately relayed reports of Mandela yelling at Mbeki behind closed doors. At one point both had to deny that the current president was refusing to take the previous one's calls (he was). The main point of fracture is Mbeki's wacky views on HIV/Aids. Although the president was finally forced to shut up last year, his crazed Aids denialist beliefs continued to be faithfully regurgitated by party hack Peter Mokaba – who died a few months ago, aged 44, of, er, Aids.

Meanwhile Mbeki's abysmal, gaffe-prone health minister still appears to be doing everything in her power to prevent the provision of anti-retroviral drugs. Manto Tshabalala-Msimang surpassed herself during the conference when she had to deny that she had said we could not afford anti-retrovirals for 4.5 million HIV sufferers as we needed to buy submarines in case of an attack from… the US! Mandela though takes every opportunity to be pictured with Aids-sufferers and campaigners, and recently said that those in power who did nothing to stop the spread of Aids were in effect committing genocide.

No wonder Thabo looks fidgety. But perhaps he has reason to be paranoid. Days before the conference a leak about a book by a prominent academic, lambasting Mbeki for abandoning the poor, made the front pages. Co-publisher of the tome? His younger brother Moelesti Mbeki!

Thabo spent much of last year stomping nastily on his ANC allies, the Communist Party and the Trades Union Congress, while shoring up his support to the right (and white) by signing a cynical pact with the old oppressor, the "New" National Party. But as the celebrated human rights lawyer Dumisa Ntsebeza claimed on the eve of the conference, the ANC rules just like the old Nats – a grave charge from the former head of investigations for the truth and reconciliation commission.

To prove the point Thabo has just awarded our second highest honour, the Order of Mapungubwe, to F.W. de Klerk (who, it is now conveniently forgotten, was in charge during the run-up to our 1994 election, when secret units of the apartheid armed forces and security branches went on an unchecked rampage of mass butchery).

So where will opposition come from in future? Many on the left placed their hopes on vice-president Jacob Zuma. There'd even been murmurs of putting him up to challenge Mbeki – but that exploded when, to general astonishment, Zuma issued a statement claiming he had no presidential ambitions. Sure. Nevertheless as Mbeki continued to swing further right, Zuma was still seen as a possible successor – until a couple of weeks ago.

Out of the blue it was revealed that he is under investigation for possibly soliciting a bribe from a French arms company – part of the £4.5bn arms package Mbeki's government has forced through (to save us from the US?) The affidavit making this allegation was written a year ago and had since lain unchecked and unpublicised. Why should it surface on the eve of the ANC conference? It sinks any ambition Zuma might still harbour of succeeding Mbeki and ensures the president has a lame-duck number two when he submits himself for re-election in 2004.

Which Machiavelli, ANC folk speculated, could have leaked this now? The most popular suspect's name begins with an M.

FUNNY OLD WORLD

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

o "War toys have been around forever, but the problem here is the change in focus," Eric Garris of antiwar.com told reporters in California. "This is not just another war toy, it's a total paradigm shift in the war toy industry. It's getting young people used to a new kind of war, where soldiers shell your house, throw you out, then come in and take it over whenever they need to."

Garris was protesting about a new toy called Forward Command Post, a bombed-out doll's house manufactured by the Ever Sparkle Industrial Co. Ltd., and retailing in the US for $45. "Almost three feet tall when assembled," reads one description, "Forward Command Post is a realistic peacekeeper battle station that has been commandeered as a battlefield headquarters by fatigue-clad soldiers with assault rifles. The two-tiered house has a busted balustrade, crumbling bricks, and bullet holes pockmarking its pretty pastel walls, while the military equipment provided includes long-range sniper rifles, blood squirters, tripod-mounted cannon, bazookas, and drums of high explosives. Forward Command Post comes complete with two twelve-inch-tall soldiers, who are available either as Caucasian or ethnic brown action figures. Counter-terrorism advisers can be purchased separately."

The Ever Sparkle company, which had hitherto specialised in conventional doll's houses, defended its latest product by claiming that "in essence, the toy is no different to G.I. Joe". But outraged protestors have picketed stores selling the toy, and asked, "What's next? A Suicide Bomber Barbie who straps explosives on and jumps on the Barbie Bus?" *(Pox Americana, 30/9/02, and Toronto Globe and Mail, 23/11/02. Spotter: Wallace Brown)*

— o —

o Hand Washing The Correct Way.

Here is the correct method:

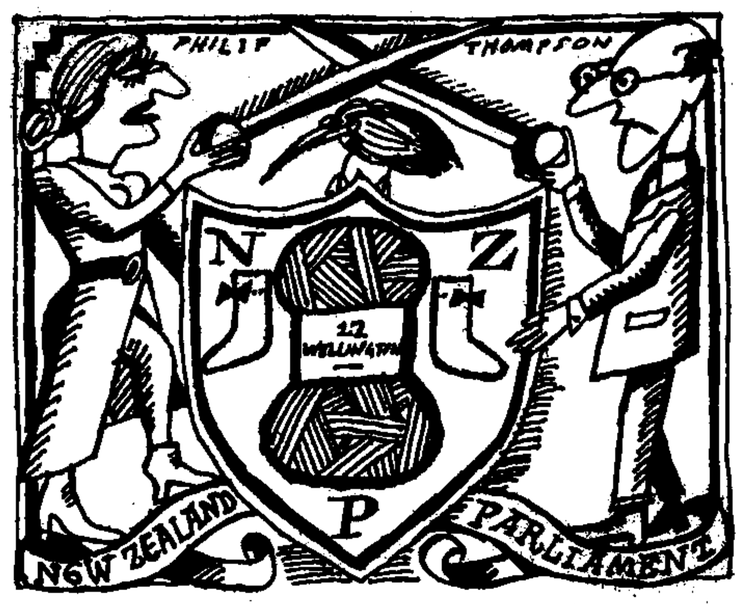
1) Turn on the tap to obtain hand-hot water.
2) Wet the hands.
3) Dispense soap onto hands and rub palms together to form a lather.
4) Rub the palm of one hand along the back of the other hand, sliding the fingers between each other.
5) Rub fingertips on opposite palms in clawing motion.
6) Rub thumbs in opposite closed hands.
7) Rinse off lather.
8) Dry hands on paper towel thoroughly.
10) Turn off tap with used towel and discard.

(Food Safe [Taunton Deane], Issue No. 3, Summer 2002. Spotter: Anon)

— o —

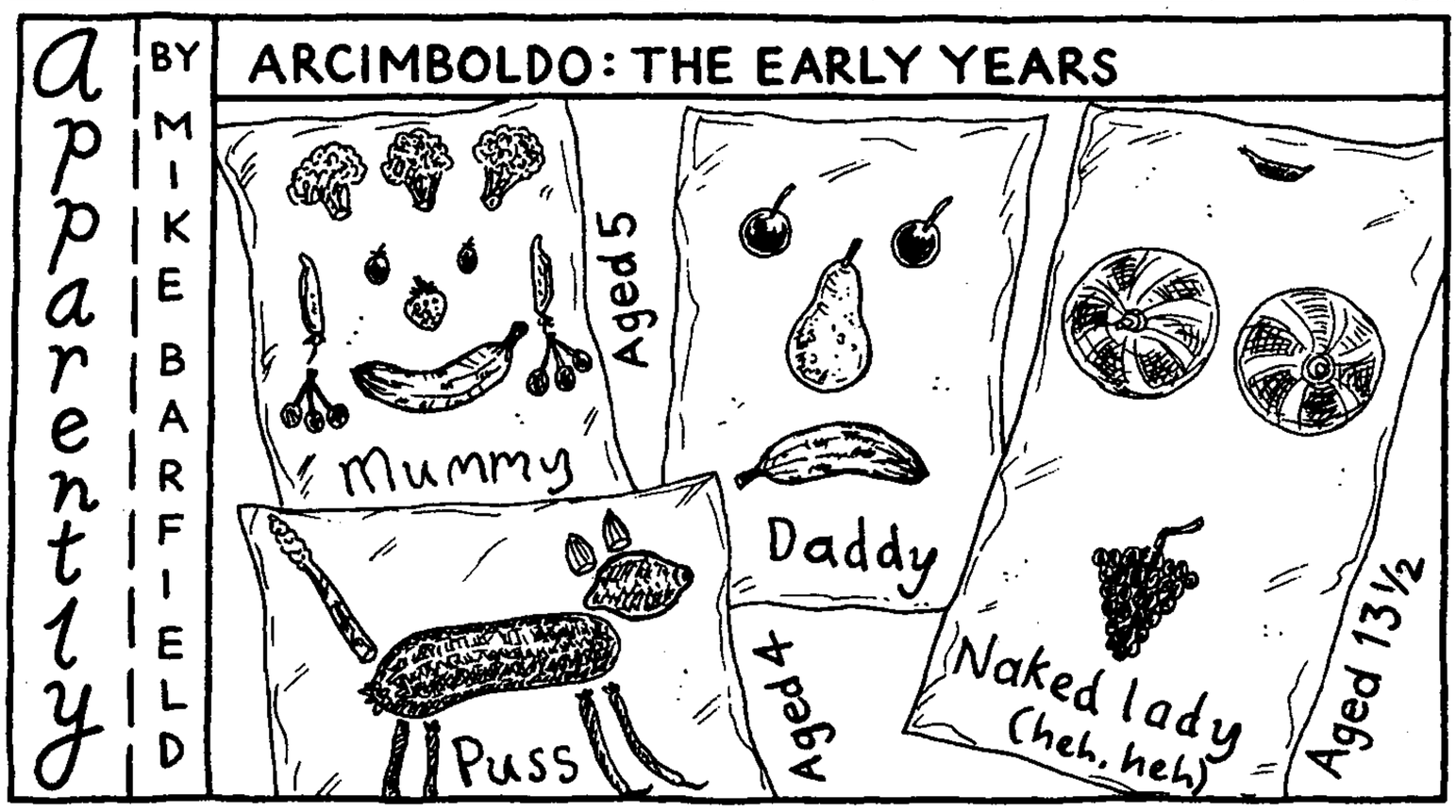
o "It may well be true that there is nothing in standing orders specifically forbidding knitting during debates," Opposition Leader Bill English told the New Zealand Parliament in Wellington, "but the action nevertheless smacks of rank arrogance. For a minister to sit knitting baby booties while presiding over legislation that is under her care is to bring Parliament itself into contempt. Anyway, standing orders already ban 'computers and other devices' from the chamber, and knitting needles are a device, as well as being a potentially dangerous weapon, so they should be banned too."

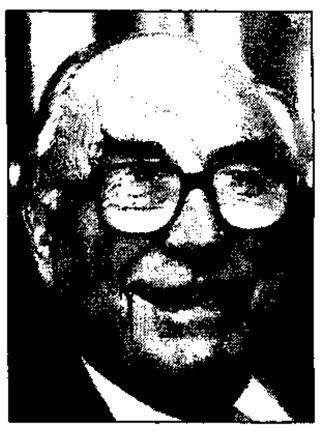
English was speaking after the Associate Minister of Commerce, Judith Tizard, had started knitting while MPs were debating her Trade Marks Bill. Defending her hobby, Tizard stated that "I have knitted in the House on previous occasions, and I shall knit again. My knitting has not been ruled out of order by the



Speaker in the past, so why should it be objected to now, just because I am a minister? This complaint has nothing to do with knitting, and everything to do with politics."

After taking guidance on the issue, Speaker Jonathan Hunt ruled that "knitting is permitted in the House, but it is not permitted from the minister's chair." However, retired MP Marilyn Waring objected to the ruling. "I knitted thirty-two garments including a three piece suit during my nine years in Parliament," she told reporters, "and it was the only productive thing that I ever accomplished in the debating chamber." *(The Western Australian, 23/11/02. Spotter: Beverley Mayer)*





LORD JENKINS CLARET POURS IN

(Surely 'Tributes'? Ed.)

by Our Staff **Lunchtime O'Bituary**

TRIBUTES poured in today to the man they called the giant of modern politics.

Reformer, statesman, political biographer, and the creator of New Labour, he will be remembered above all for his gift for claret *(Surely "friendship"? Ed.)*

Britain's most senior politicians yesterday queued up to pay their respects to this "middle of the road" colossus.

The Prime Minister **Tony Blair** said, "He was a great man whose greatest achievement was to destroy the Labour Party, thus making it possible for someone even greater than him to take it over."

Said **Lord Healey**, "People say he was the greatest Prime Minister Britain never had. How wrong they are. I can think of at least one former Labour Chancellor with much bushier eyebrows who would have been a much better Prime Minister than him."

Said **Roy Hattersley**, "We may have had our differences, but we were both called Roy and we both enjoyed a good lunch."

Said **Lord Harris of Kintbury**, "I well remember him saying over one of our lunches at the Old Boar at Snorebury that we must have another lunch again soon."

Said **David Owen**, "Roy's greatest and indeed only talent was writing books and even then he wasn't much good. We will never see his like again, fortunately."

Said **Mrs Margaret Thresher**, of the East Hendred Branch of the Wine-To-Snack conglomerate, "This is a sad day for the world of claret. Lord Jenkins was one of the great political drinkers of our time who broke the mould from the Stilton at Christmas to accompany an excellent bottle of chateau *(cont. p. 94)*

BLUNKETT ATTACKS GOD

by Our Religious Staff
Archbishop Rowan Pelling

THE Home Secretary hit out this week at "the bearded old lefty sitting on a cloud, completely out of touch with everyday concerns".

Said Mr Blunkett, writing in *Beards and Beardmen* (formerly the *Spectator*), "His language is impenetrable and no one has any idea what he is trying to say. What I take to be his criticism of this government is completely wrong. He should keep out of politics and concentrate on what he does best, ie moving in a mysterious way."

Yesterday, God would make no comment.

School news

St Cakes
Gun term begins today. There are 432 dead in the school and several wounded. P.J. Kalashnikov (Shooters) is Keeper of the Arsenal. A.K. Uzi (Sawnoffs) is Captain of Drive-bys. The Head of Music, Rev. J.S. Vaughan-Williams, has been replaced by Mr "Bo" P. Diddy Deadboy, formerly Head of Music in Rampton High Security Prison. There will be a performance of "Bonny and Clyde" (adapted for the street by Mr Deadboy) on 7th March, St Armalite's Day. Crossfires will be held on the killing fields on 12th February. Raps will be granted on April 2nd.

Exclusive to Private Eye

That Fayed Sunday Telegraph Letter

Before Editing

You Fuggin' Lawson,

You fuggin' shut up you shiddy-face with your shiddy wife, you try and fuggin' make out I'm some kinda fuggin' crook well the fuggin' laugh is on you innit you shiddy-faced fugger. Who's got the biggest fuggin' dick now?

What You Actually Read

Dear Sir,

For the past few years, this newspaper has used its columns to write about me in a consistently negative and critical way *(continues for 94 pages)*

BLAIR TO CRACK DOWN ON 'REPLICA GUNS'

by Our Firearms Staff **Phil Withsand**

THE Government has ordered an immediate inquiry into the number of "replica guns" which are being used by the British Army.

The weapons look like real guns but, in the event of an armed conflict, immediately jam and fail to fire.

"It's a disgrace," said the Prime Minister. "All these criminals have got guns that actually work, whilst our lads in the Gulf have got these duds.

"Something must be done, but not, obviously, by me."

HETEROSEXUAL JUDGE APPOINTED

BRITAIN's first heterosexual judge was appointed last night amidst claims that he would be unable to relate to the majority of the population *(cont. p. 94)*

THE CAUSES OF CRIME Pt. 94

ADVERTISEMENT

FOR THE MAN WHO IS GOING NOWHERE

THE IDS ZIMMERFRAME

THIS advance in perambulatory technology from the Institute de Zimmer in Geneva has been specially made for Britain's top Tory.

Send now for full colour brochure of all products.

Says IDS, ***"When the next election comes, I'll walk it"***

£399.99

IDZIMMER OFFER, Unit 94, The Trading Estate, Yeovil.

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

The Editor, Alastair Campbell writes:
In view of the Vicar's well-earned winter holiday festival break in Egypt (NOT paid for out of parish funds, please note!) in place of his usual letter we are printing the text of his New Year sermon:

"My text this morning is taken from a placard I saw being carried outside Tesco last week. It read, very simply, 'The End Is Nigh'.

And that is really my message to you all today! As we look around us at the modern world, we see little to comfort us.

We see the floods, almost biblical in their proportions! We see the plague of flu stalking the land!

We see the threat of a global recession which even Mr Brown will have his work cut out to avoid!

And looming above all we see the awesome figure of the Great Satan, as he is so aptly called by our friend and fellow-crusader, the Rev. Dubya of the Church of Latter-Day Morons!

On all sides, we find ourselves confronted with huge moral decisions, such as should we allow our church collections to be taken only in euros!

Is it any wonder that many people will agree with that gentleman as he wanders up and down our High Street, telling people that they should repent of their sins while there is still time!

But as we all contemplate the imminent extinction of our planet by the Evil One (whether in his bearded or his moustachioed guise!), are there any words of comfort I can offer to you all this morning?

I believe there are! Does it not say in the Good Book: 'Look, I am with you always!'? *(Gospel according to St Look!)*

And that's so true. I want you to remember, as you walk through these dark days, menaced on all sides by the forces of

darkness, that there is always going to be one shining light leading the way ahead of you through the shadows!

Someone who can always be relied on! Someone with vision, with courage, with integrity!

Someone who is ready and willing to help you with his rod and staff of personal assistance!

Can any of the children tell me who that rock in your lives might be?

That's right, Darren! It's your vicar! Though I am glad it was you who said so, because it would be inappropriate for me to blow my own trumpet in such an obvious way!

Still, out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, as they used to say in older times, there comes a truth which even our editor Mr Campbell could not improve upon!

So, thank you to the children for their vote of support! And thanks also to their parents for entrusting me with the awesome responsibility of leading this little Fellowship into the distant land of Mordor, where our friend Rev. Dubya has called upon us to defend Middle Earth against the ravages of the evil Sauron Hussein!

And now our final hymn '*All things dark and terrifying, All creatures wild and scary*'!"

A STATEMENT FROM CHERIE BOOTH QC

It has been drawn to my attention that a certain local radio programme ran what was supposed to be an amusing seasonal poll asking listeners to name the person who most deserved to be thrown out of the parish. 98% of those responding apparently named myself. I wish to point out that, under Article 74.2 of the Human Rights Act ("the right of very important people not to be the subject of opinion polls") this is a prima facie criminal offence committed by all those persons who were responsible for responding to, organising, broadcasting or in any other way facilitating the above vile calumny on one of the most hard-working and dedicated

Unfortunately, there was not sufficient space to print any more of this self-serving guff from the vicar's wife. My job is hard enough already without having to cope with the latest embarrassment from Mrs 'Two Flats' Blair. Apologies! A.C.

Parish Postbag

Dear Sir,

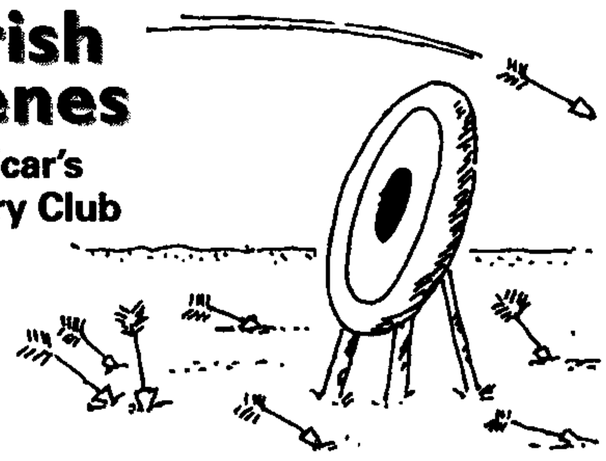
I would like, through your columns, to protest in the strongest possible fashion at the deplorable influence of that contemptible army of spin doctors surrounding the Vicar who are no better than sweat rags and snot-filled dishcloths. I refer, of course, to the likes of Mr Alastair

Yours sincerely
Mick McGorbals, Speakers Corner

The Editor reserves the right to cut all letters for reasons of being defamatory of himself, and would point out that he knows where Mr McGorbals lives! A.C.

Parish Scenes

The Vicar's Archery Club



by local artist Mr Turner

A Postcard From Egypt

Dear all,
How appropriate that at this time of year, I and Cherie and the infant Leo should be taking a flight into Egypt! No but, joking aside, I wanted everyone in the parish to know that I paid for this postcard out of my own pocket (and the stamp as well!). So let's not have any more malicious tittle-tattle about freebies, shall we? Cherie loved the pyramids which she said gave off "the most amazing cosmic energy". She only wishes she could bring one home for her friend Carole's Holistic Therapy Workshop!

From "your Desert Father"

Tony

PS. We've just returned from a fabulous snorkelling trip in a place called Sharm el-Sheikh. Perhaps the Sunday School could look it up on their maps of the Ancient Kingdom of Israel!

Prayers

I have received a very moving prayer from Mrs McElvoy, a loyal member of our Women's Group, which I have decided to use in all our services.

Dear Lord,

Counsel our leaders in this time of trial and guide them in the ways of war. Harden their hearts and steady their aim, so that they may go forward and kick ass. We ask this in the name of Bush the Father, Bush the Son and the Holy Rumsfeld. *Amen*

MORE TROOPS ARRIVE IN GULF

by Our Defence Correspondent
Col. Lateral-Damage

THE PROSPECT of war in the Middle East became more likely yesterday with the arrival of a detachment of cavalry who are planning to set up base in the region.

The Four Horsemen, whose appearance experts believe marks the imminence of a major conflict, are armed with state-of-the-art swords, scythes and hourglasses, as well as a fully operational last trumpet. They are also equipped with the latest chemical-weapons-resistant black-hooded robes.

Amazing Revelations

Said the Commander-in-Chief, Death, "We've got a job to do here and we'll do it to the best of our abilities. The chaps have been in training for millions of years and War, Famine, Plague and I are keen to show everyone that we are prepared to do whatever is necessary.

"Obviously no one wants to see the end of the world, but sometimes tough decisions are necessary and if that involves stars falling from heaven and the seas turning to blood, well, so be it."

Apocalypse Now

"Of course we are sorry to be away from our loved ones at this time of year, but we have a duty to destroy Babylon and turn the earth into a smoke-filled wasteland."

On Other Pages

● How The End Of The World Spells Trouble For House Prices... **7**

Advertisement

What You Won't Read In This Week's

newstatesman

☆ Time To Gaol The Drunken Drivers

☆ Why It Would Be Wrong To Legalise Cocaine

☆ Blair Should Sack His Drugged-Up Cronies

☆ Why Do The Police So Often Let Criminals Walk Free?

PLUS

Cristina Odone on *'Is Robinson The Weakest Link?'*

COUGH 'GETTING BETTER ALL THE TIME'

by Our Medical Staff **L. O'Zenge**

IN AN upbeat New Year message, Tory leader Iain Duncan Cough assured his followers (Sid and Norris Bonkers) that victory was in sight.

"My policy of saying nothing is at last paying off," Mr Cough revealed last night.

"All the evidence – apart from the polls – shows that we are on our way to a massive landslide victory at the next election," he claimed.

"Ever since I became leader," he continued, "I have kept firmly to a single policy – i.e. to remain silent – and people are beginning to respect me for that.

"It is not too optimistic to suggest that we shall very soon be in a position to defeat the Liberal Democrats, however unlikely that may look at the moment.

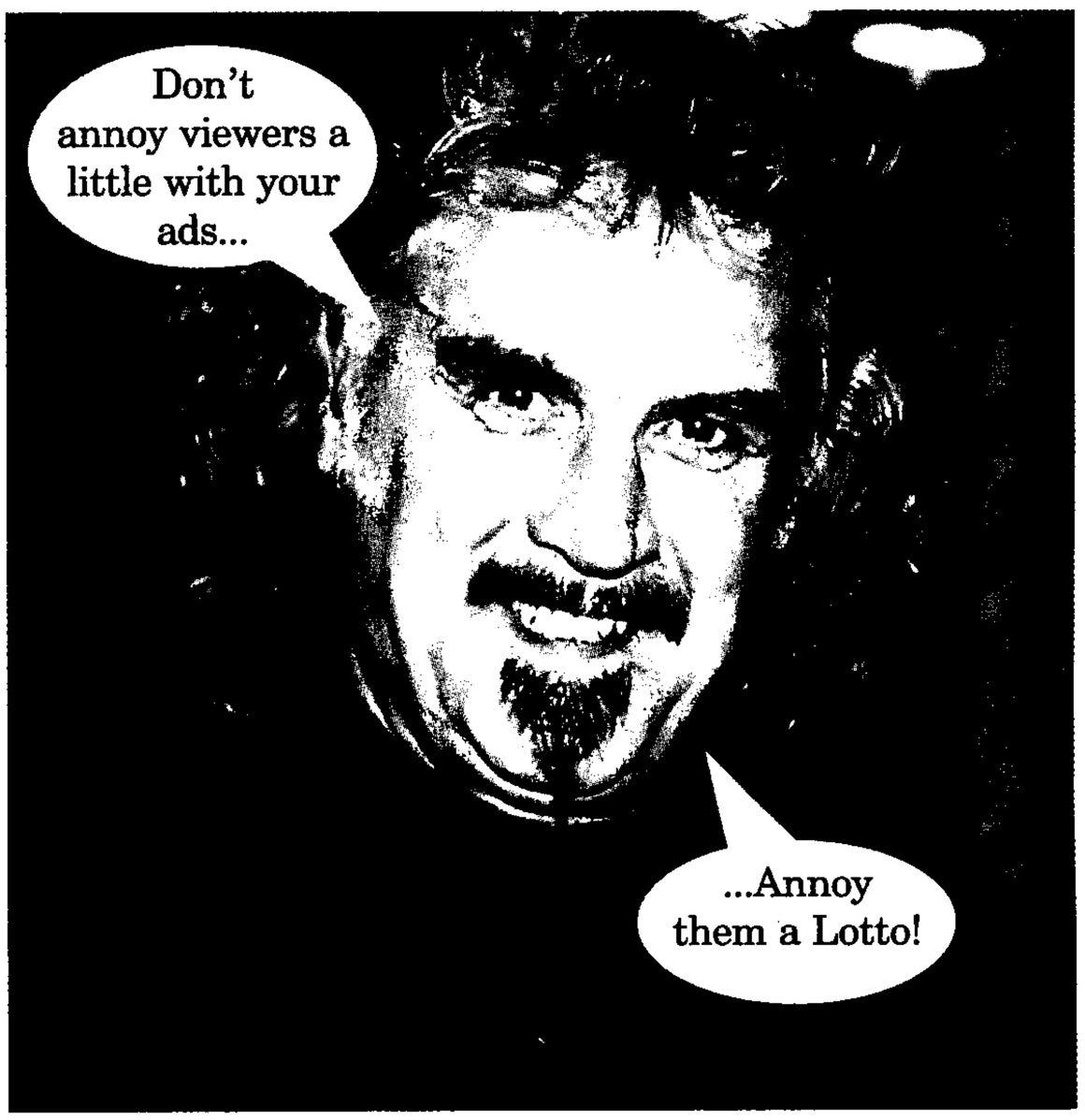
"It's an old Tory saying – the night is always darkest before I'm sacked."

Late News

Iain Duncan Cough has assured worried voters that proposed Tory tax cuts will in no way hit essential services.

"We're never going to be in government, are we? So how could they?" he said.

Advertisement



An OBE for King Edward the Fox for services to the plus-four manufacturing industry

Former Times Editor Peter Stothard, knighted for services to the crossword

Andreas Whittam-Strobes: an OBE for services to the pornography industry

Edwina Currie: made a Dame for services to John Major

(Continued from page 1) for services to the linoleum trade in Uttoxeter; **The Rev J.C. Flannel**, vicar of Somewhere-in-the-News, for services to being on the television; **Mrs Onawugo Lollipop**, for services to the road safety of young children in the West Midlands.

DVT (Civil Service)

Kevin Triplicate, audit supervisor, Inland Revenue, Maidstone; **Keith Fish**, press officer, Rural Payment Agency; **Dipak Sixpack**, carol-singing licensing division, Department of Culture, Media and Sport.

DVD (Commonwealth)

R.G.B. Silvester, services to the karaoke industry in the Gilbert & Sullivan Islands; **Dr Ahmed Chatanoogoo**, services to sexually transmitted diseases in Papua New Guinea; **Mrs Polynesia Fillah** for services to journalism as columnist on the Pitcairn Gazette & Bee; **Mrs Aloha There** for services to the grass-skirt weaving industry in Tuvulu (formerly the Lennon & McCartney Islands).

Order of Queen Adelaide (Second Class)

Reginald Gaytrouser for services as Deputy Comptroller of the Silver Polish in the household of the late Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother; **Quentin Loonie**, Keeper of the Islamic Garden at Highgrove; **Nobbie Fence**, Receiver of the Queen's Gifts, for services to the second-hand antiques industry; **Bruce Doberman**, dog-handler to the Princess Royal.

What You Missed Over Xmas

Not Only Another Programme About Peter Cook But Also One Featuring All The Same People Who Were In All The Others (BBC1, Holiday Friday)

This was the 54th documentary about Peter Cook broadcast in the past year, but only the seventh last week. Highlights included some old men who knew him at Cambridge, some slightly younger men who met him in London and some even younger men who saw him on TV in the last years of his life and thought he was very funny. Perhaps best summed up by the great Dr Sir Jonathan Miller, when he compared Cook's "cracking of the comedic code" with Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood and *(Continued p. 94)*

TV Highlights

The Fight 2

BBC2 Wednesday 9.30

IN A follow up to the Bovey v. Gervais bout, the Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan 'Beardy' Williams and David 'Beardy' Blunkett slug it out over fifteen rounds of bruising right hooks and theological argument.

TOMORROW'S WORLD TO BE AXED

the PREMIERSH*TS

PAUL WOOD
HOME SUPPORTERS
TODAY'S GAME HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO A WATERLOGGED PITCH
DAMN IT!
CITY
I HEAR OUR NEW MULTI-MILLIONAIRE SIGNING STILL WANTED TO PLAY THOUGH
REALLY?
YEH, HE BELIEVED HE COULD STILL WALK ON IT!
CITY
CITY

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Popular First Names

From Lady Fantonia Pinter

Sir, As is customary at this time of year, I am sending you a list of the most popular names for boys and girls in the year 2002, based on announcements in your Births column.

BOYS	GIRLS
1 Osama	1 Edwina
2 Dubya	2 Condoleezza
3 Rumsfeld	3 Kylie
4 Romeo	4 Camilla
5 Aragorn, son of Arathorn	5 Mugabe
6 Dumbledore	6 Galadriel
7 Sven	7 Cherie
8 Saddam	8 Carole
9 Enron	9 Dame Judy
10 The Earl of Onslow	10 Sex and the City

Yours faithfully,
LADY FANTONIA PINTER,
Dunhomecomin, London W11.

POETRY CORNER

Lines On The Break-Up Of The Marriage Of The Poet Laureate

by The Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion

It has all been very civilised
Though inevitably painful
For both parties.

These things are never
Pleasant but in the end
You have to try to do the best
Thing for all those involved.

The writing was on the wall
From the time Miss Laura
Fish swam into my life.
Although I might have got
Away with it
If she hadn't gone to the
Newspapers.

But not for nothing is
My name Motion.
We must move on.
We must move forward.
Today
Is the first day
Of the rest of my life.

This poem is available on audio-cassette for use in schools as part of Module D7 in the Human Relationships course Key Stage 3.

POET LAUREATE TO BE SENT TO PRISON

by Our Literary Staff **Otis Redding Gaol**

IN AN unprecedented move, a judge has ordered the Poet Laureate Mr Andrew Motion to go to prison for 3 months "to learn how to write poetry".

Bard for Life

His Honour Justice Peabrain told a stunned court, "Mr Motion has committed a number of offences on the English language and this is his only chance to better himself."

Mr Peabrain then read out a poem by Mr Mark Patterson, a successful graduate of Her Majesty's Creative Writing Course at the University of East Wing (formerly Wormwood Scrubs Polytechnic).

So. Thank you
Judge Peabrain
For letting me
Out.

It makes me
Want to dance
And shout.

And go into
Someone's house with
A meat cleaver
And take all
Their money.

M. Patterson
(17½ other poems to be taken into consideration)

Tough on Rhyme

Opponents of the scheme, however, called Mr Motion's sentence "A waste of public money."

Said one, "These people never learn, he will be back on the street writing his poems about Princess Anne in no time."

HOW TO LOOK THIN AFTER CHRISTMAS

AT THIS time of year, after the usual surfeit of Christmas goodies, a lot of newspapers start to look amazingly thin. How do they do it?

Now you too can share their secret by following the Fleet Street 'Get Thin Quick 2003 Plan', as practised by all the country's top newspapers.

Day One: Run enormous double-page spread about going on a diet after Christmas.

Day Two: Run huge feature about detoxing yourself for 2003.

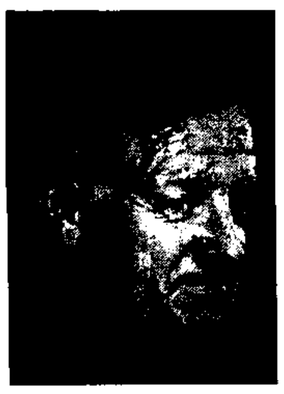
Day Three: Run new series on how to exercise yourself back to slimness.

Day Four: Devote most of newspaper to feature on "How Your Star Sign Can Help You Lose Weight".

Day Five: Begin 94-part cookery series on Nigella's Perfect Easter Chocolate Gorge Fest. *(That's enough. Ed.)*

Exclusive to all newspapers

HUSBAND AND WIFE SPLIT UP SHOCK



Man

Woman

by **Phil Space**

A MARRIED couple shocked the world yesterday when they announced they were to split up.

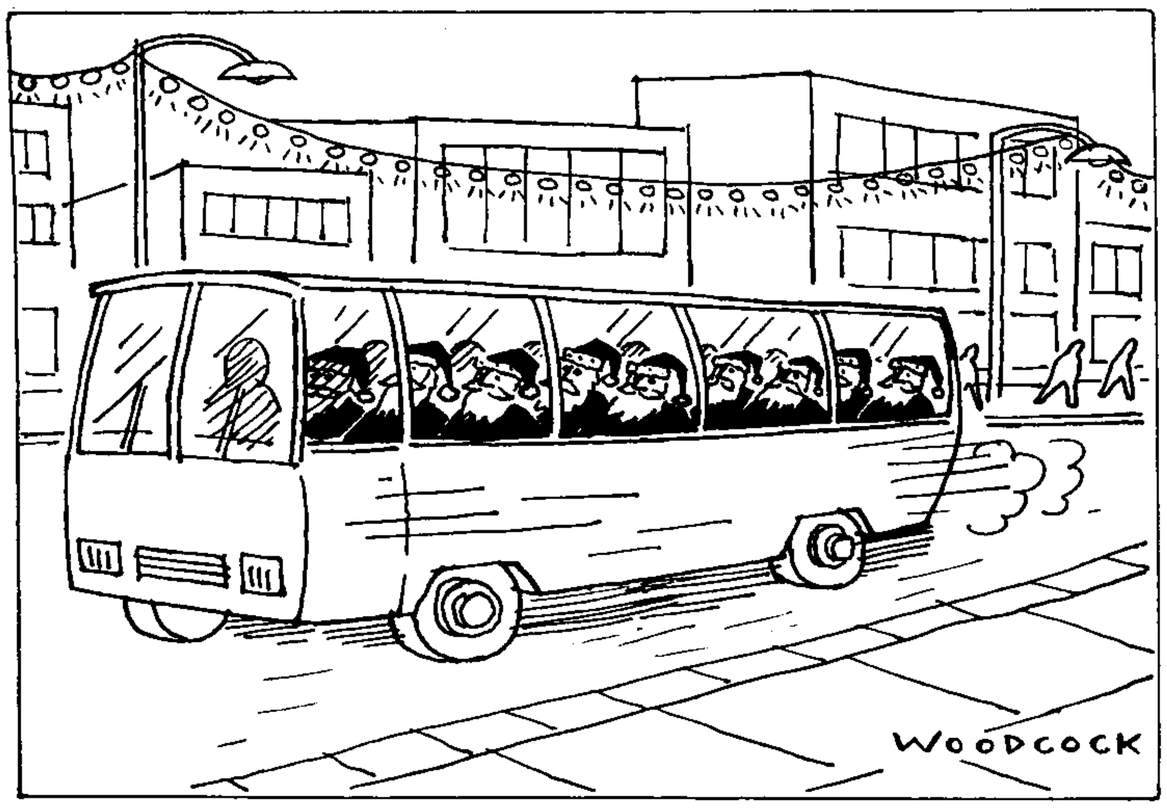
An expert commented: "When two people split up, it's normally a sign that they've parted company."

On Other Pages

Dr Thomas Stuttaford on What Happens When People Split Up **13**

BLUNKETT LEADS NUMERACY DRIVE

STAR TREK
THE EXHIBITION
RIP OFF
HYDE PARK
TO BOLDLY GO
THE ADVENTURE STARTS HERE
THAT WILL BE £17-50 EACH. THERE IS NO REDUCTION FOR CHILDREN. PLUS A BOOKING FEE. THAT'S £60, SUCKER!
CLOAKROOM
COATS £2
BAGS £2
BIG BAGS £4
UMBRELLAS £2
I'M BEGINNING TO WONDER IF I CAN AFFORD THE TREK
IT TOOK ME FIVE LIGHT YEARS TO GET HERE FROM WOKING BY TRAIN
PROGRAMME! ONLY £9.99!
IN
GOD! HAVE WE BEEN COUCH POTATOES FOR FORTY YEARS!
BORG QUEEN
DATA
ACID BURN
UP
BORG DRONE
BUSH CLONE
ROOT OUT THE AXIS OF EVIL IN OUR UNIVERSE/ FREE THE WORLD!
I'M SORRY! YOU'RE TOO BIG TO BEAM UP!
BUSH BORG
HOW HORRIBLE
BANG
CRASH!
NO DONT TELL ME, I NEVER FORGET A FACE!
SOAPS IN SPACE
FRIGHTEN-ING!



Daily Mail, Friday, January 10, 2003

Introducing

Max Hastings

The World's Worst Columnist

Why We Should Get Up In The Mornings

IT'S all too easy, isn't it, to wake up in the morning and think, "Oh stuff it, I'm going to turn over and go back to sleep." When the choice is between the snug warmth of the bedclothes and the bracing chill of a dark winter morning, nine times out of ten one's inclination is to stay put.

And why not? Recent polls have shown that many of you share my feelings about the difficulty of getting up in the morning. It is one of the hardest things most of us have to do in the entire day.

Wasn't it P.G. Wodehouse (or was it Winston Churchill?) who said "Early to bed, early to rise, is not a good idea"?

Keep Going, P.D.

But what is the alternative? Wouldn't the nation quickly grind to a halt if we all decided to stay in bed?

Just think about it for a minute. No trains. No buses. No smiling postman to push our letters through the door.

A grim prospect indeed. And one which reinforces my long-held view that it is desirable for the good of the community that all of us who are capable of doing so should make the effort and get out of bed.

And anyway, once you're up, it's not really half as grim as you think it's going to be.

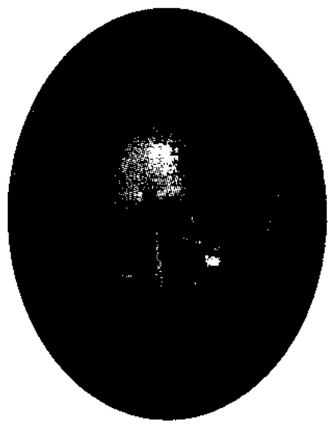
Once you've gritted your teeth, slung your legs over the side of the bed, found your glasses and pulled on an old dressing gown, the world doesn't seem too bad a place after all!

Particularly when your slumbers have been interrupted by a call from the editor of the Daily Mail offering you £5000 for writing a load of drivel like this.

© *Hastingstrash Productions.*

Wedding of the Century

How They Are Related

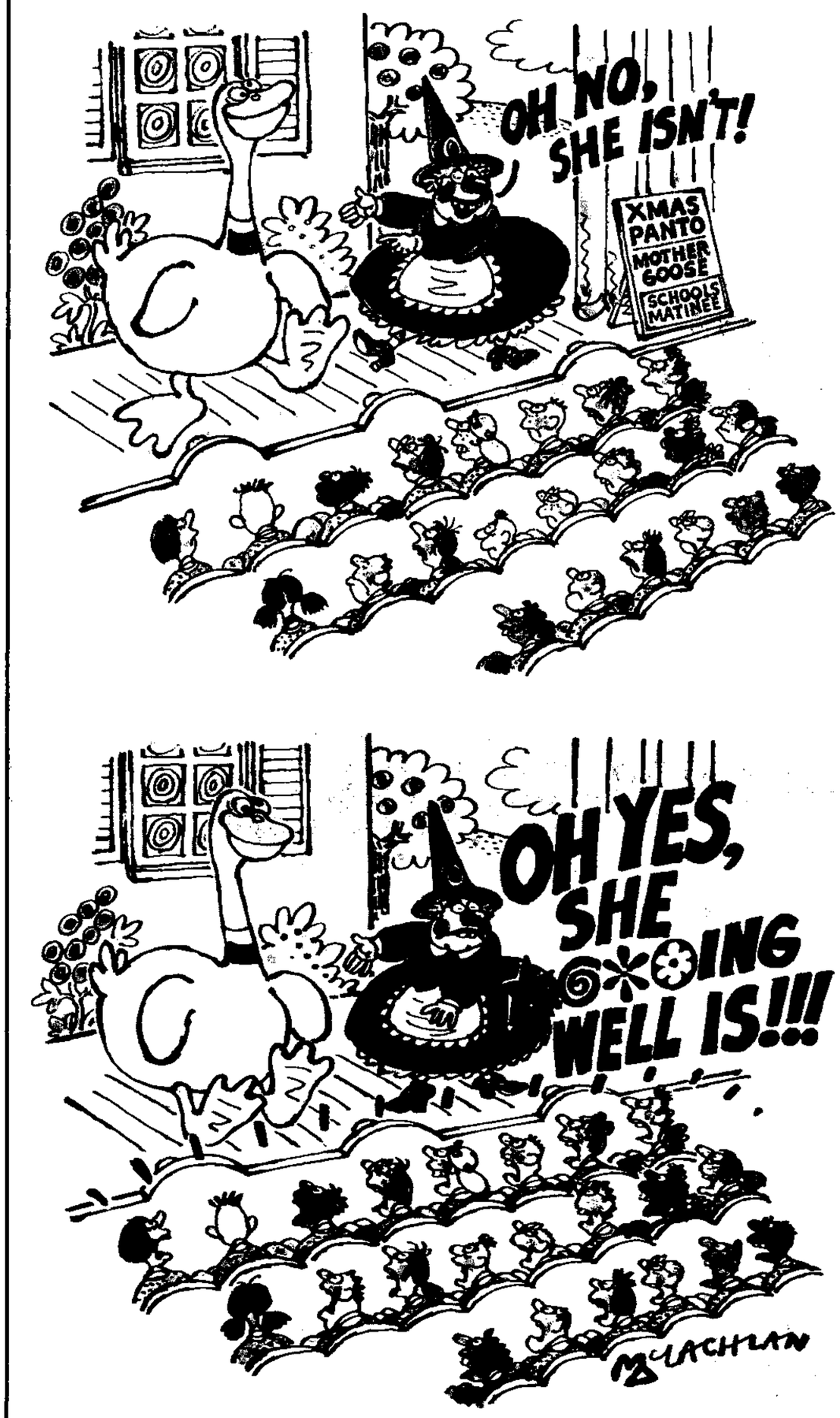


Jonathan Aitken

Jonathan The Lyingheart
|
Bad King Jonathan
|
Jonathan King
|
Jeffrey The Archer
|
Lord Beavercrook
|
Lord Kagan
|
Sheikh Shifti al-Bakhanda
|
Jonathan The Baptist

Elizabeth Harris

The Harris of Tweed
|
Harrison Rex
|
Robert Harris
|
Richard Harris
|
Mata Harris
|
Harrison Birtwistle
|
Harrison Enfield
|
Dame Maria Aitken



PREDICTIONS FOR 2003

BRUCE ANDERSON: The country is rapidly coming round to Iain Duncan Smith, and rightly so.

Ordinary people recognise him as a charismatic, forceful leader who daily knocks Tony Blair into a cocked hat. Everywhere he goes, he is greeted by cheering crowds quite literally in their millions. At his best, he reminds them of John Major in his heyday.

The Conservative Party is supremely well-positioned to make expert use of the fine weather ahead.

Anyone who has studied the weather recognises that storms and floods are a thing of the past. The first few days of January will bring sunshine and cloudless skies the like of which this nation has never seen before. I predict a hosepipe ban in the second week of January, followed by a prolonged period of sunbathing.

Perfect Tory weather, in fact – and in his shades and shirtsleeves Duncan Smith promises to cut an immensely dashing figure, winning the General Election on June 4th 2003 by an impressive margin of 5.04 per cent. At last the armchair critics will be silenced, as Duncan Smith proves, once again, that, far from being outdated, the Tory Party is as permanent a fixture in our nation's life as that other notable monument, the West Pier at Brighton.

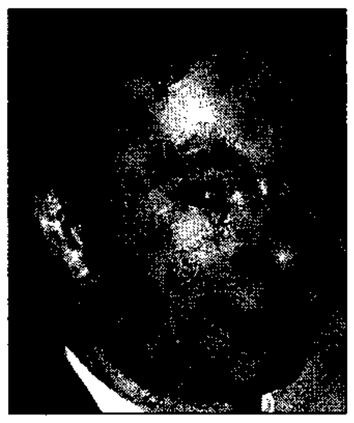
JILLY COOPER: Down here in the simply blissfully lovely English countryside, it'll certainly be a happy "moo" year (!!!) for all our adorable cows with their gorgeous udders and great big swishy tails.

But people – super, lovely people – are humans too, let's not forget. And I know two fabulous gorgeous people who love each other very much and will never, ever be parted, no matter what.

Their names?

Les Dennis and Amanda Holden. The most adorable and loving couple in the world today.

I predict the coming year will see them defying the nasty, nasty gossips and growing closer together. With so many perfectly ghastly things happening in the world today (how one LONGS for the to-die-for George Bush and tall, dark and have-some [!!] Saddam to give each other a great big huggle and become the very bestest of friends), at least we can rely on our resident lovebirds Les and Amanda sticking together like Uhu. Which reminds me – a gloriously happy "glue" year to one and all (!!!)



TONY PARSONS: One thing's for sure.

This is an ever-changing world.

But at least we can be sure of one thing.

Some things never change.

Come rain or shine, the great Jimmy Young has been broadcasting to the British nation these past fifty years. And he's held us spellbound.

The guy's a legend in his own lifetime. He's given the British language some of its most popular expressions. "Good morning.". "Cheerio". "And the next record is from Mr Chris de Burgh." These are phrases on everybody's lips.

Sir James – Jim to you and me – goes from strength to strength.

The bloke's a diamond.

My prediction for 2003? It's safe to say he'll continue to broadcast his hugely successful daily "prog" on Radio Two.

But my bet is that the powers-that-be will now to popular demand – and extend the "prog" by an hour each day.

And that – as Jimmy himself might say – would be "perfick".

POLLY TOYNBEE: Tony Blair will kick off the New Year by delivering a speech of appropriate optimism, silencing the doom-mongers by celebrating all that is right with Britain and the world.

He'll make it abundantly clear that any prospect of "war" with Iraq is just another convenient fiction got up by his foes in the right-wing press. And he'll go on to say that Britain will enter the Euro at the earliest possible opportunity. Finally, turning to matters abroad, he will condemn the Arap Moi regime for continuing to deny Kenya the democratic government it deserves.

I end with a personal plea to this Labour Government to make the wearing of waterproof hats or bonnets in wet weather compulsory. Countless studies have proved that this would save the hard-pressed NHS countless millions in money spent on colds, chills, slight sniffs and even pneumonia. Though undoubtedly useful, umbrellas can never give complete protection against the rain, particularly in blustery and/or stormy weather. On-the-spot fines or custodial sentences for those right-wingers who fly in the face of common sense by going outdoors without adequate protection is long overdue, and would help put government resources back where they are so desperately needed – to restore all those coal mines closed by successive Tory governments, and keep Thatcher out of Number 10.

HEATHER MILLS McCARTNEY: All in all, 2002 was like a pretty good year for me.

First, I used my contacts and positive energy to bring peace to the Middle East. They said it couldn't be done, but once again I proved them wrong.

Second, I achieved a personal ambition of having a number one hit single, no, I can't remember its name but it's like in all the books.

And fifth, I proved to the world I was a deeply committed person when I was selected from thousands by the BBC to chair *Newsnight*.

So what does 2003 hold in store? This morning I was just rescuing a dog from a fierce sea when I got a call from Joe Strummer asking me to duet with him at Glastonbury this year, which should be great. And towards the end of the year, I intend to teach my husband Paul the chords for some of my old songs like Yellow Submarine and Yesterday, so he will be able to accompany me on my world tour.

As told to

CRAIG BROWN

YOU NEVER FORGET YOUR FIRST TIME DO YOU? MINE'S INDELIBLY INGRAINED IN MY MEMORY, BARRY.
YEAH?
I'D JUST STARTED MY FIRST U.K. TOUR AND SHE WAS A PRETTY LITTLE BLONDE IN EXETER...
WHAT WAS IT LIKE?
THE USUAL STORY. SOME NERVOUS CLUMSY FUMBLING AND IT WAS ALL OVER IN SECONDS. I'LL ALWAYS REMEMBER HER THOUGH...
SO WHO WAS THE FIRST PERSON TO ASK FOR YOUR AUTOGRAPH?
SOME GEEZER IN A PUB IN PUTNEY I THINK.

Literary Review

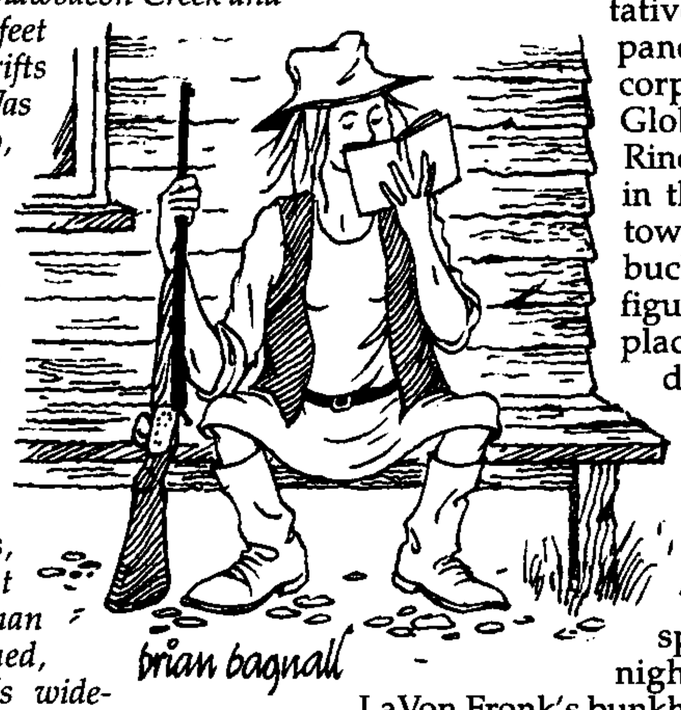
Extra ordinary people

That Old Ace In The Hole

Annie Proulx

(Fourth Estate, £17.99)

"..Week after Thanksgiving six feet of snow fell over Chawbacon Creek and the dead steers' feet poked out of the drifts like TV aerials. Was that time, too, that old Frick Krautburgel, fixing his pick-up at the roadside where he'd gotten bogged down in the mud, winged a tyre-iron into his throat and choked to death on the blood. Leastways, that was what highway patrolman Moosejaw reckoned, who found Frick's wide-eyed corpse, as he passed that way back from the Lonestar steakhouse pedal steel convention..."



ACTUALLY I am making this up, but you get the idea. Welcome back to Annie Proulx country, as distinctive and dangerous a territory in its way as Jack London's Klondike wastes or Evelyn Waugh's Mayfair drawing rooms: a lone, lorne landscape populated by bug-eyed monomaniacs and slack-jawed cowboys just itching to pump you full of buckshot or take you back to the ranch on Brokeback Mountain and show you their collections of gold lamé jumpsuits. Yessir, and dam' right too.

Ms Proulx, now a ripe late-sixtysomething, doesn't write a great deal – just five books in the decade and a half since *Heartsongs* kicked off her career – but what she does produce comes brimming with resonance: open spaces, spreadeagled lives lived out in the scuffed-up, godforsaken badlands of northern and western America, dense larrikin monologues pumped out by people only just on the right side of sanity. And I mean *careful* with that axe, Eugene!

Close Range, the last short story collection, homed in on out-of-town Wyoming, where everyone's ma was in a bad way and the gas station was about to fail. The gas station *always* fails in Annie Proulx: you could set a clock by her primitive determinism.

That Old Ace In The Hole offers more of the same, with the action transferred south-west to the Texas panhandle. Here young Bob Dollar, newly appointed regional representative of an expanding mega-corp named Global Pork Rinds, ends up in the one-horse town of Woolybucket (he figures that the placard in the donut shop – YES WE HAVE LATE – is the local spelling of "latte") spending his nights in Mrs LaVon Fronk's bunkhouse and his days out cruising the back roads in covert search – the locals are mighty suspicious – of suitable hog-farm sites.

From this side of the Atlantic, inevitably, the whole caboosh looks as authentic as a rattlesnake: a backyard dirty realism of blighted hopes and neurosis. Until, that is, you begin to apprehend the lavish stylisation that now characterises Ms Proulx's work. For a start, there are the names. These, always odd, have now taken on a quite extravagant loopiness. Gerald Popcorn. Advance Slauter. Bob's boss bears the unlikely moniker of "Ribeye Cluke". A local dancehall moll sails under the flag of "Ruhama Bustard". Then there are Ms Proulx – or should I say Ms Prolix's – altogether rococo lists and digressions, into which she slides as effortlessly as gopher down a plank. Half a page on Woolybucket's ecclesiastical congregations ("the Primitive Baptist Church, the New Light Baptist Church, the Sunrise Baptist Church...", etc), dense paragraphs on cattle husbandry, line upon line recounting Bob's uncle Tam's obsession with art plastic...

Every so often all this thronged stage decoration is pushed aside to make way for one of the trademark monologues. Here, for example, is Sheriff Dough's old daddy, who worked as a cook in the state penitentiary, recalling the fare served up to condemned men: "A lot a the nigger, special your Muslin, refuse a last meal. They rather fast. Another one ask wild game – guess he thought we goin out and make a javelina hunt for him. He get cheeseburger. Had my way he would a had road kill..." As with the late Raymond Carver, you start off admiring the spare, elemental rhythms and end up thinking that, well, a great deal of authorial hard work went into this.

Ms Proulx's backyard tragicomedies give off exactly the same air of "ordinary" people pinned to the page with a desperate literariness. Even here in rural Texas, apparently, the lure of the creative writing class is impossible to resist.

One Schott wonder

Schott's Original Miscellany

Ben Schott

(Bloomsbury, £9.99)

IF ANY of you should happen to be reading this while perched on the throne, chances are that somewhere beside you, beneath the unopened Jubilee books and the valedictory issue of the humorous magazine *Punch*, there lies a copy of this Christmas's "surprise" hit: *Schott's Original Miscellany*.

For those who have neither bought, received nor encountered publishing's latest diversion, it's a hotchpotch of scattergun trivia which relies for its humour on juxtaposing the incongruous, the incidental and the defiantly banal. So on page 93 you will find "Some Ballet Terms", the old clause IV of the Labour party constitution and the scoring for Canasta.

By the author's own admission, *Schott's Original Miscellany* "makes very few claims to be exhaustive, authoritative, or even practical. It does, however, claim to be essential." And essential it has proved, if Christmas sales are anything to go by. In a chart dominated by posh trollops telling us what not to wear, what not to eat and several other cautionary what-nots, a book about nothing at all has cleaned up.

Essential maybe, but *Schott's Original Miscellany* is assuredly not original. Almanacs from *Whitaker's* to *The New York Times's*; reference medleys from Michael Calder's *Ultimate Book of Lists* to *The Cambridge Fact Finder*; garbage trivia pot-pourris such as Keith Waterhouse and Richard Littlejohn's *Book of Useless Information* – all of these cover similar ground and they appear every six months or so.

If you're interested in miscellanea you will undoubtedly be aware of the countless websites like uselessknowledge.com, where a thousand Ben Schotts ping-pong bagatelles hither and thither, but without the comfort of a publishing deal. It is instructive to consider the influence of the internet in the timing of Schott's book, for on reflection this *Miscellany* is no more than an aimless webtrawl of the kind we all undertake every so often, recast as an 18th-century divertissement. The difference being that in the 18th century you might impress someone down the Pie Shop with your knowledge, whereas today they would assume you had got it from Google. No wonder the publishing world is calling *Schott's Original Miscellany* a surprise hit, the surprise being firstly that Bloomsbury paid Schott to "write" it, and secondly that so many mugs have paid good money to buy it.

Of course the book's tacit retort is that it is beyond serious criticism because any reader looking for something to actually read is a po-faced grampus who should just button up and enter into the jolly-joshing spirit of the thing. There is something mildly irksome in this, like when a crass practical joker claims it's his victim that lacks the sense of humour. *Schott's Original Miscellany* may delight in being a trifle but it is a trifle backed by a major publishing house, a trifle that costs £9.99 and a trifle that has somehow wormed its way on to the prized pay-till position at Waterstone's and Borders. Every confused Christmas shopper in need of a stocking-filler to go with the mouldy tangerine has therefore dropped one straight into their basket.

This is no piece of whimsy but a calculated appeal to the burgeoning semi-literati who want to buy books but, if possible, would prefer not to have to read them. Make no mistake: *Schott's Original Miscellany* is a brilliant piece of marketing, not the blithe fancy of an anarchic archivist.

While we're on the matter who, pray tell, is the author, the self-styled gleeful bounder Schott? It is intriguing that our latterday Old Moore has chosen to place his name in the title, a theme he continues by asserting a pompous authorial presence throughout the listings, noting also that he conceived, wrote and designed the book, before adding a page later that he typeset it as well. Though the design of the book and the trumped-up bombast are all designed to suggest our author is a polymath boulevardier in a tweed three-piece, or indeed a gout-ridden clubman firing off Dr Johnson quotes in a fug of fine claret and cigar smoke, in fact Ben Schott is a recent Cambridge graduate in his late twenties – an astute marketing man and, we're told, a useful photographer, but no Pitt. Simply put, in this case a young Turk has repackaged the internet for old duffers and they have bought it – in every sense.

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
IT'S GOOD TO SEE THE BBC PROMOTING READING
100 BEST BOOKS SHOW
WAR AND PEACE
HOORAH! THERE'S SOMETHING ON THE TELLY!
100 BEST BOOKS

WHAT YOU DIDN'T MISS, Pt 94

Tony Benn's Diary

July 24

A lovely day. Up early to catch the 6.46 from King's Cross to Doncaster for Reg Blumenthal's funeral. A big turnout at the crematorium, including Sid Weighell, Chris Mullin, Paul Foot and Vanessa Redgrave who read a lovely poem by Lorca. Reg's widow, Mira, asked me to speak and I said that Reg had been all his life a fighter for truth and had his left leg blown off in the Spanish Civil War.

There were drinks and sandwiches afterwards in the Civic Centre. I had a long talk with Jimmy Knapp. A lovely man.

Waiting for the train on the way back, a man came up to me and said "Are you Tony Benn?" I said I was and he said he had always admired me very much – "You speak your mind". I was very touched by this.

July 26

Meeting of the PWFG. Ken Livingstone spoke very well about the situation in Kosovo. I said the UN had to be involved. Brian Jarvis proposed a vote of thanks.

I took a cab home. The driver told me he had previously worked in a fish and chip shop where he was paid £2 an hour. That is modern Britain for you.

Watched Rory Bremner. A lovely programme.

July 29

An interviewer came from Channel 4 to ask me about Blair's reshuffle. Then the *Independent* rang up wanting an article.

Mashrif Laboudi came round in the afternoon. He said the situation was deteriorating very badly and that the Americans had lost interest completely. I like him very much and agreed to send a letter to President Baghoul, though I doubt it will have any effect.

Watched *Casualty*. A lovely programme. *(Cont. p9994)*

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

■ MISANTHROPIC novelist Philip Kerr has been preparing for the possibility of a terrorist attack

His wife Jane Thynne, also a novelist, was disturbed to find that Kerr has bought one adult's gas mask for himself and another gas mask for a child, when there are two adults and three children in their family.

Kerr has also acquired from the United States a contraption for detecting dangerous levels of radiation in the atmosphere, which means that in the event of a radioactive dirty bomb being exploded in central London he would be one of the first residents of Wimbledon to receive a warning. As soon as the machine was installed, its alarm mysteriously went off and an anxious Thynne rushed to examine the data. The contraption advised her to tune in straightaway to the television news and await further instructions.

Last but not least, Kerr has invested in a single body-wrap suit for protection against chemical or biological agents. When Thynne asked what it was for, he grumpily explained: "It's for when I travel on the Tube."

REMAINDERS OF THE DAY

■ COUNTY Bookshops in Derby managed a political triple-whammy over Christmas.

John Rentoul's biography of Tony Blair was reduced from £8.99 to £2.99, alongside Paul Routledge's tomes on Gordon Brown and Peter Mandelson with a fiver off each, selling at just £1.99.

A further £1.99 would have bought you Robin Ramsay's inappropriately-titled *Rise of New Labour*.

"Another thing – you always finish your book before me"

Warballs

"Though it's no incitement to cinema-going, the film has collected a fearful dread from the way the world has gone since 9/11. Peter Jackson's film, unplanned though it was, now looks like a prophetic allegory for Osama bin Laden's messianic threats to world order as well as the besieged resistance of the great and the small. Even the subtitle *The Two Towers* involuntarily recalls the Twin Towers. Lines like 'A new power is coming, its victory is at hand' or 'There will be no dawn for men' or 'War is upon us' have gained the resonance of fundamentalism that overlays cinematic fantasy... The oak trees are so rooted in protocol that they're almost potbound – the comparison to the United Nations doesn't pass unnoticed – but they rally round the forces of Good in the nick of time."

— Alexander Walker reviews the new *Lord of the Rings* film in the London *Evening Standard*.

"First came 11 September 2001, that morning when [Michael] Crichton was aboard a jetliner heading from the East Coast to his home on the West Coast... The plane bearing Crichton was diverted to Indianapolis and grounded there, with one of the world's most popular writers left to ponder his brush with fate and what-if. 'I went through a personal... well, what can you say,' remarked Crichton in Seattle last Thursday. 'Let's just say it was something to absorb, to digest. I can say that I was not going through what everybody else did that day.'"

— *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*.

In Honor of Our
Fallen Heroes . .
FREE MEDIUM FRIES
BURGER KING
Valid at the following locations only:
Rt. 1, Massaponax;
Rt. 3, Spotsylvania Mall;
Rt. 3, Ferry Farm;
Rt. 3, Lake of the Woods;
Leavells Road, Hilltop Plaza
- with this coupon -
Offer valid Sept. 1 to 12, 2002
One coupon per person • Not valid with any other offer

Pseuds Corner

What I have always appreciated about Marvel Comics is that they deal with the crisis of masculinity.

PROFESSOR CARLA FRECCERO
BBC News website

The state of holiness that Catholicism inspires has parallels in the state of wholeness that holistic therapies promise. Both require faith and the suspension of disbelief. Both use oils, water and incense to induce a sense of mysticism. Jesus washed his disciples' feet. Carole Caplin scrubbed the toxins from Cherie's body.

MARY ANN SIEGHART
The Times

The picture of Cherie Blair's stricken face, her eyes wide with fear, unsettled me all morning.

TINA BROWN
The Times

In its own subtle way, "White Christmas" is a musical gesture as aggressive as "Anarchy in the UK" or anything on Eminem's The Marshall Mathers LP. Listening to the song's lulling, maudlin, immemorial strains, we hear something more than a seasonal standard: the

toughest punk anthem ever to masquerade as a Christmas carol.

JODY ROSEN
Observer

[The cigarette is] somebody to whom I go asking for solidarity and comprehension and company and friendship when I am very tired or very angry or very sad or even when I'm very happy...Dinner for me is a Socratic event. You talk, you smoke, you eat, you drink a little.

ORIANNA FALLACI, interviewed in the *Financial Times*

Pseuds Corporate

Our mission is to efficiently initiate consumer based paradigms in order that we may conveniently integrate prospective assemblages while maintaining the highest standards. In order to achieve this and still exceed customer expectations, it is of vital importance that all employees innovate open-source metrics without resorting to disintermediate nonmission-critical niches. This can be achieved in the short term by use of valid multivariate morphogenesis, but in the medium to long term we should be working towards time-bound dendritic portals (the Kritiriebundel model). In visualizing cross-platform solutions through incubating world-class deliverables we can continue to orchestrate vertical networks and position our brand at the forefront of 24/365 customer focused vortals.

First Choice Holidays HR department intranet site

The images chosen to depict the Mellon Global Investments brand come from the photographic collection of the acclaimed Italian artist Franco Fontana. His dramatic sweeping landscapes containing an interesting focal point are unique, delighting the eye with their richness and depth of colour...

This concept perfectly embodies Mellon Global Investments' mission to deliver a broad landscape of investment capabilities provided by our 16 individual, specialist asset managers to clients through best in class investment products and services.

From the Mellon Global Investments Christmas card

CONTRIBUTORS: Simon Whitaker, Martin Philip, M.G. Sherlock, Helen Chadwick, Richard Hamilton, Anon, Quentin Smith.

IN THE BACK

DOZEY PARKER

NATIONAL Grid Transco, the new private monopoly that distributes gas and electricity to British consumers, is in trouble again (see *Eyes* 1061 and 1069). This time the problem is the danger to public safety resulting from the monopoly's continuing failure to carry out its responsibilities to its competitors.

The chief campaigner for higher standards from the monopoly is a north London businessman called Andrew Duffield. A former senior executive for the nationalised British Gas, he knows a lot about the gas industry and decided some years ago to set up his own company, Exoteric Gas Solutions (EGS), to take advantage of privatisation.

Mr Duffield's company connects premises to the gas main and installs meters. Over the last five years, his efforts have been consistently frustrated by Transco, chiefly by the time-honoured practice of lying, cheating and cutting corners with public safety.

Mr Duffield has kept up a constant stream of correspondence and legal actions against the monopoly, and has even sued Transco for libel (the action was settled after the company agreed to pay him £101,000, plus costs). Throughout he has had the support of his MP, Barry Gardiner (Labour, Brent North), who in an adjournment debate on 4 December denounced Transco as "liars". Despite two previous debates and constant reminders, correspondence and warnings, he said, "the company is still lying and bullying". Moreover, the regulator, Ofgem, was "positively spineless".

Anxious not to use parliamentary privilege for mere abuse, Mr Gardiner proved his charges in detail. His most serious allegation was about false information supplied by Transco to Mr Duffield's company about the necessary design pressure for meters that EGS was installing. Again and again Transco gave the wrong information about the necessary pressure control arrangements for the meters. If Mr Duffield's company had installed equipment on the basis of this wrong information, there would have been a serious danger of gas explosions, with obvious implications for life and limb.

Mr Gardiner told the Commons of three cases where the wrong notification of pressure had been supplied by Transco. In each case EGS had been told that low-pressure equipment was required instead of medium pressure. Luckily EGS checked the information before proceeding. If it had installed meters on the basis of Transco's false information, the consequences, said Mr Gardiner, could have been "catastrophic".

The minister for energy and construction, former firebrand Brian Wilson, promised rather pathetically to look into these matters, and is meeting Mr Duffield soon. In the meantime the *Eye* hears of three more recent cases in which false information about pressure was supplied by Transco to EGS.

The first two – one at East Kilbride, the other at Warminster – were passed on, shortly before Christmas, to Ofgem and the health and safety executive (HSE). Neither body took any enforcement action against the monopoly. On 2 January Andrew Duffield wrote to Sir John Parker, chairman of National Grid Transco: "We have today discovered yet another case of Transco informing us that a service pipe to which we were to connect a meter was operating at low pressure when it was in fact operating at medium pressure." The site was at Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. The letter asked when Sir John was going to take effective action to stop this practice. There has been no reply as yet; but judging from previous responses, neither the company nor the regulator nor even the HSE will do anything about this until someone dies from a gas explosion.

Sir John Parker

QUOTE TO REMEMBER: "Some of the high profile and sad events of corporate life in my view are due to those at the top, who are well paid to lead, not having taken that seriously. I can't believe that top management where things have gone so badly wrong from the accounting point of view were not fully aware. You can normally smell the sulphur in the air – you can detect when guys are cutting corners," Sir John Parker, chairman National Grid Transco, *Sunday Times* Business News, 14 July 2002.

BOOZE NEWS

AFTER a competitive tender MCM Research, a private consultancy, has been appointed at taxpayers' expense to advise the department of environment, food and rural affairs (Defra) on the problems of noise and disorder that might follow the passing of the licensing bill.

Dr Peter Marsh, the mastermind behind MCM, has been an expert on problems in pubs and the connections between violence and disorder since he was co-director of the contemporary violence research centre at Oxford University in 1977. Recently he has been active in promoting the licensing bill, the Labour government's (and the brewers') much-cherished legislation to "free" pubs from the "restrictions" of the licensing hours.

The bill has been guided through parliament by the department of culture, media and sport (DCMS). In the debates in the Lords on the bill, a central issue has been that of the "cumulative impact" on pubs of noise and nuisance. As it stands, the bill is so closely drafted in the interests of publicans and brewers that it prohibits licensing authorities even from taking into account this "cumulative impact". But opponents of the bill, including many residents' associations fed up with rowdyism and crime brought on by alcohol, point to the recent environmental noise directive which obliges governments to plan against exposure to noise.

The issue arose in November in front of Judge Martineau at Blackfriars crown court where a publican argued that noise and nuisance were not important enough issues to refuse a licence. The judge rejected the application. The publican was supported in court by Dr Peter Marsh's MCM Research.

MCM's website shows that its clients include The Amsterdam Group (Bacardi-Martini, Bass Brewers, Brauerel Beck, BSN-Kronenberg, Carlsberg, Guinness, Heineken, Hiram Walker Group, Interbrew, International Distillers and Vintners, Moet-Hennessy, Pernod Ricard, Seagrams, and the Whitbread Beer Company). Other clients are Australian Associated Brewers, Bass Taverns, the Brewers and Licensed Retailers Association, the Cider Industry Council, the Distilled Spirits Industry Council of Australia, Grand Metropolitan Retail, IDV, the Portman Group, Pubmaster, Toby Restaurants and Wolverhampton and Dudley Breweries.

The *Eye* asked Defra if it was appropriate to appoint a consultant so closely allied to the drinks trade to advise the government on noise and nuisance in pubs. A spokesman said the contract had been let in November and it was "not appropriate" to comment on the successful applicant. So the *Eye* asked how much taxpayers will have to pay the brewers' friend for advice on pubs. The answer was predictable: no comment. Why? The usual "CC", which readers might think stands for "complete cover-up" but in fact stands for "commercial confidence".

VACCINE

FLU WHAT A STINKER

A ROW has broken out over reports that four of the seven flu jabs on offer this winter contain thimerosal – a 50 percent mercury-based preservative which is supposedly being phased out of all vaccines in the United States and Europe because of its possible links to autism, Alzheimer's and brain damage.

Though the debate about thimerosal in vaccines is muted in Britain, in the US the preservative is at the centre of a multi-billion dollar lawsuit. Parents there maintain their children's autism and brain damage have been triggered by a build-up of mercury.

Last year a congressional hearing into the tenfold rise in autism in the US heard that a study by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) indicating a possible link between thimerosal and autism was never published. This led to claims of a cover-up.

The US Institute of Medicine has said the link was not proven but "biologically plausible". There was insufficient evidence either way. In the meantime the US has decided to phase out all thimerosal and doctors there have been advised to opt for mercury-free vaccines wherever possible.

So why, when presented with a choice of flu jabs, did Britain's health department opt for some with thimerosal? A spokesman said: "In response to your question about why the department doesn't just buy thimerosal-free flu vaccines, flu vaccine is not purchased centrally. It is purchased directly by GPs." This ignores government responsibility for vaccine and medicine safety.

The spokesman added that the decision to phase out the preservative in the US and Europe was "precautionary". "There is no convincing evidence of harm to anyone, including infants and pregnant women, caused by small amounts of thimerosal in flu vaccines and the benefits of flu vaccine outweigh any hypothetical risks."

In the US the authorities are clearly more concerned – particularly about the legal action. Four clauses have been slipped into the national homeland security bill, introduced in the wake of 11 September, effectively exempting drug manufacturer Eli Lilly from the mercury lawsuits brought by parents. (Eli Lilly contributed nearly £1m to the Republicans in the latest political campaign.)

The clauses pushing the autism cases into special vaccine courts were apparently designed to protect companies in their efforts to develop vaccines to protect against biological welfare. But the ensuing outrage at provisions that have nothing to do with state security has forced promises from both the senate and the House legislative wings that the clauses will be changed to allow litigation to proceed.

Meanwhile in a separate move the justice department in Washington asked the vaccine court to block public access to government and drug manufacturers' documents in the 1000-plus autism cases it is already handling.

DOW CHEMICALS

Thanks for the many letters about the *Eye*'s story about the alleged Dow chemicals press release on Bhopal. As the story pointed out, the *Eye* assumed the release was a fake and a spoof, and emailed dow-chemical.com to verify it. When the reply came back that the release was genuine and its perpetrators were proud of it, the *Eye* published the release as though it were genuine. It now emerges that the entire website was a spoof, as we should, we now realise, have recognised. Sorry.

BLOOD MONEY

HAEMOPHILIACS have written to the government to protest at last month's decision to buy up the US's last independent blood-plasma company.

The health department put down £50m, with a promise of a further £21m, for Life Resources, a group of 27 affiliated companies that collect blood across the US. The aim was to secure supplies of blood-derived products such as clotting factors, albumin and immunoglobulin for haemophiliacs, patients with serious burns, shock and trauma and those with immune dysfunction. Doctors have been faced with a shortage ever since 1998, when the threat of contamination with CJD meant our own donated blood could no longer be used.

The trouble with the US deal is that it relies upon paid donors – a practice the World Health Organisation, the EU and indeed our own transfusion service argue should be banned. When money is the incentive to donate, there is always a risk that desperate people will not be honest about their health. Indeed it was contaminated blood imported from paid donors in the US that infected so many British haemophiliacs and others in the 70s and 80s with terrible diseases like HIV and hepatitis (though there is now better screening and blood treatments available.)

In a letter, Carol Grayson of Haemophilia Action UK accuses health ministers Hazel Blears and Lord Hunt of hypocrisy: "How can you have regulations in this country which do not allow the Blood Transfusion Service to pay its donors on safety and moral grounds, yet say it is acceptable for donors to be paid for imported plasma?"

A health department spokesman said that the purchase of Life Resources secures supplies of plasma products for a wide range of patients, not just those with haemophilia.

"There is no evidence from clinical studies and pharmacovigilance that paid plasma donation contributes an increased risk of viral transmission via plasma-derived medicinal products. The safety of plasma-derived medicinal products is optimised by the stepwise application, in the course of collection, manufacture and batch release testing, of a number of complementary measures. Their safety is not dependent on the use of unpaid donors." So why does everyone else want to see the practice banned?

Of course all risk from contaminated products to haemophiliacs would end if health ministers would buy the synthetic clotting agent, recombinant (available to all haemophiliacs in Scotland, Wales and Ireland, but only provided for children up to 16 in England on costs grounds.)

FUEL'S PARADISE

DOES the government's grant scheme to encourage cleaner car fuel need encouraging to clean up its own act? The Powershift scheme, operated by the government's Energy Saving Trust (EST), is currently handing out wads of cash for cars to be converted to make them *more* polluting.

Powershift is funded by the department for transport. Its purpose is to jump-start a market in "cleaner fuels" by making it cheaper to convert ordinary cars to run on liquefied petroleum or compressed natural gas (LPG/CNG).
Unfortunately, policy is running several years behind the boffins in the car industry who are developing cars that produce fewer harmful emissions from normal petrol.

Anyone converting a Suzuki Super Carry to run on supposedly eco-friendly LPG could get the taxpayer to cover 40 percent of the cost of conversion and would escape paying London's congestion charge. Yet after conversion the car would produce 16 percent *more* carbon dioxide (CO_2) and more than twice as much nitrogen oxide (NOx) than its petrol equivalent.

Conversion on a Proton Impian – which costs around £2,000 but attracts a 60 percent grant – would leave the car producing 120 percent more toxic carbon monoxide (CO) than it did before. The results for NOx show no improvement on the standard petrol car and the results for CO_2 are "N/A" according to the register's detailed tables. Not much environmental benefit for the taxpayer's £1,200.

● AND is there a future for biofuels, the much-vaunted petrol and diesel substitutes made from crops? Gordon Brown isn't entirely convinced. There was big disappointment when he announced a 20p a litre cut in duty on bioethanol "petrol" rather than the 40p cut which would have encouraged investment in plant.

If biofuels ever do take off (they are well established in some countries), they could provide a lifeline to farmers. But will they save the world? Though they are always referred to as "green" or "environmentally friendly" they are in fact neither. Astonishingly, the production and use of biofuels causes about half as much climate change effect as fossil fuel itself. While that is a reduction, it still doesn't make it "environmentally friendly". Such misleading language creates the belief that when we have "green" fuel we can go on using huge cars at high speeds as much as we like. We can't.

POLICE 5

Is this a record?

WHEN 64-year-old Roger Harris appeared in court on discredited public order charges following an animal rights protest at a Sussex farm, he was staggered to hear the police declare that he had a string of previous convictions for, among other things, theft and fraud.

The maritime pilot had never been in trouble in his life but was suddenly being branded a jailbird. Not surprisingly, after video footage shot before Mr Harris's arrest showed a Sussex police inspector shouting: "Let's have him. That old git, that's walking away", the case was thrown out.

Unfortunately this wasn't the end of the matter but the beginning of a two-year battle to have his false criminal record wiped. After repeated demands from his solicitor to have the inaccurate police records corrected, Mr Harris, from Gravesend, Kent, eventually complained to the information commission responsible for data protection. He found that Sussex police had ignored procedures and acted in contravention of the data protection act.

The force was ordered to review its procedures and implement safeguards to ensure such errors couldn't happen to anyone else. Mr Harris was told he might be entitled to compensation if he wanted to pursue the matter through the courts. Instead he decided to rely on the police complaints authority (PCA) which was investigating his arrest and charging.

Mr Harris's complaints included one for unlawful arrest – he says not only had he done nothing wrong, but he was walking away from the area when he was stopped. He says the arresting officer was forced to ask the inspector what to charge him with. He also complained about the "disgraceful" conduct of the inspector, the failure to wipe the criminal record once it was known to be false, and a failure to inform him when the original charge was dropped. He says he was only summonsed on the later public order charges after he started to complain about his treatment.

The PCA has just told Mr Harris that as no specific officer or officers could be found to be at fault over the record, it falls outside the PCA's remit. In fact the only complaint the PCA was prepared to uphold was the "old git" insult, because it was clearly heard in the video footage. For that the inspector is to be given a jolly good "ticking off". Mr Harris probably wishes he'd sued after all.

FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS... FOLLOW-UPS...

■ **PROACTIVE SPORTS:** The resignation of Peter Reid, former manager of Sunderland football club and former shareholder in sports agents Proactive, does not end the connection between club and agency. Reid has been replaced by Howard Wilkinson, who has two batches of shares in Proactive: 40,000 in his own name and 68,000 in the name of accountants Teather & Greenwood, Proactive's stockbrokers.

One of the more embarrassing joint enterprises between Sunderland and Proactive was in March 2000 when Sunderland signed a striker from Uruguay called Milton Nunez. The fee was £1.1m, which seemed a snip for a player from Uruguay's top-flight side National Montevideo. *Whoops!* Nunez was actually playing for a quite different side, Uruguay Montevideo from the country's third division. He turned out to be rather less brilliant than had been expected, and played only one half of one game for the first Sunderland team. His transfer was arranged by Paul Stretford, chief executive of Proactive.

When the mistake was discovered, Sunderland sued Uruguay Montevideo for the fee, but lost the case in the high court. Mr Justice Blofeld ruled that there had been "no serious case for deliberate fraud". He explained: "Just because Mr Stretford mistakenly considered them [the two Montevideos] to be one and the same club doesn't mean there's a strongly-arguable case for fraud." He ordered Sunderland to pay the costs of the case.

■ **BARRON INQUIRY:** Shortly after our report in *Eye* 1067 concerning the British government's reluctance to hand over key documents to Justice Henry Barron in his inquiry into the Dublin and Monaghan bombings of 1974, the matter was taken up at question time in the Irish Dail.

On 6 November no fewer than seven TDs [MPs] bombarded the Taioseach with questions demanding to know when the requested files could expect to be delivered and why the British ministry of defence had advised important witnesses not to respond to a letter for help from the Justice for the Forgotten victims group.

Miraculously the MoD was able to announce two weeks later that it had located new files which would be submitted to Barron shortly. Accompanying this gesture was an indignant letter to the *Irish Times* from British ambassador Ivor Roberts. He insisted that "to suggest that my government is trying to frustrate the inquiry is a travesty". He did not, however, give any explanation for this uncanny timing, nor indeed when and if more documentation might be forthcoming.

■ **BLANTYRE HOUSE:** Ioin McLellan-Murray has lost round one in his fight for justice following the spectacularly botched raid on Blantyre House prison and his removal as the much-praised governor.

Mr Justice Stanley Burnton has refused him leave for a judicial review of the home office investigation into his complaints about the affair – but not because his case was without merit. The judge said he was sympathetic to McLellan-Murray's cause and that the contents of the home office report into the affair "go beyond the unimpressive" and were "irrational".

The reason he declined the judicial review was in part because he said a fresh inquiry would serve no useful purpose because of the two-and-half year delay since the raid and because Tom Murtagh, the area manager against which most of McLellan-Murray's complaints were made, has now retired.

This was of course the major concern of the all-party home affairs select committee when it criticised the home office over cover-up and delay in the affair. But McLellan-Murray, who has seen his career stagnate while colleagues have been promoted, is not giving up. His lawyers have already lodged an appeal – not least because complaints about lack of a duty of care are also aimed at the director-general of the prison service, Martin Narey. And he *hasn't* retired yet.

You can contact Paul Foot on 020 7287 3183 or the In the Back team on 020 7437 4017

In the City

THE new year has not begun well for Michael m'Lord Ashcroft. The ghosts of Tyco International continue to gain more and more substance with every investigation. And with every investigation by US federal and state authorities – the Securities & Exchange Commission, the Internal Revenue Service, the Manhattan district attorney – the risks of implication for Ashcroft grow… not to mention the likely cost of being embroiled in expensive civil shareholder litigation.

Some go as far as to suggest that prosecutors believe they are merely one insider witness short of being able to make a possible case against the Tory peer despite his protected status as a non-executive director. And American prosecutors are skilled at cutting deals in return for testimony – unlike their UK counterparts at the Serious Farce Office.

True, to date no evidence has emerged of any wrongdoing by Ashcroft – the man who launched Tyco's indicted former chief executive Dennis Kozlowski, not just into the big time but also into the wonders of offshore finance with the effective reverse takeover of ADT. But investigative microcosms such as the $2.7m purchase by Tyco of Ashcroft's Florida home – after it had been sold by the ADT founder to his wife for $100 – and macrocosms such as the misleading of investors raise increasing questions about the one-time Tory sugar daddy's role even as a non-executive.

The latest internal report lambasting Tyco's financial engineering and generating a $380m restatement of past profits makes clear that – as with so much that had emerged before about Kozlowski's egregious spending ($6,000 on a shower curtain) and loans plus the $20m commission to another non-exec Frank Walsh (who recently pleaded guilty to fraud) – none of this was disclosed to the board including Ashcroft.

The truth about how Tyco was grossly inflating profits to boost its share price was kept close by Kozlowski and his two main helpers, chief financial officer Mark Swartz and general counsel Mark Belnick, plus their underlings. The way Tyco was run is perhaps exemplified by the notation discovered on one internal document: "I would strongly recommend Never to put this in writing."

But just how much attention was Ashcroft paying to what his friend Dennis was up to? Did he perhaps not wonder about the cost of his 13-day stay in London – $110,000? Did he never discuss with Dennis or Swartz how it was that ADT's contribution to Tyco's profits was so strong or what accountancy treatments lay behind that growth?

Did he really pay no detailed attention to his old business, which now appears to have been at the heart of much of the profit inflation? Was he not alerted by the aborted investigation by the SEC watchdog into Tyco's accounts in 2000 into asking any questions about how profits kept rising or how the numbers were added up? Did he ever quiz auditors PricewaterhouseCoopers, who discovered wrongdoing but chose to stay silent? Did Dennis never discuss with him how much he liked the marina house in Boca Raton which Ashcroft says he understood was bought for a Tyco executive? Did Ashcroft never give his pal the benefit of his expertise about offshore finance when Tyco began establishing over 100 tax haven companies to assist in the financial engineering?

Because lest we forget, financial engineering is something Ashcroft helped pioneer. Indeed it was one of the reasons the City gave him the thumbs down; first at Hawley and then at ADT.

Nor should we forget that Michael Ashcroft has done very well out of Dennis Kozlowski even after the Tyco share price collapsed from over $60 to $15. He did very well out of the takeover and has made millions from selling Tyco shares since.

Those investigators still pouring over the Tyco records may have a less generous interpretation of Ashcroft's role than that of the internal investigations which always find it easier to blame those former executives already found guilty by being sacked rather than those who did nothing and stayed.

"Don't just stop at Visa. Keep going!"

AFTER a brief but undistinguished spell at the home office in charge of mutual legal assistance, mostly extradition cases, it appears that former SFO star Lorna Harris may be once again onwards and upwards.

Harris, whose reward for embarrassing the attorney-general over the Polly Peck case has been endless promotion, is rumoured to be heading to Scotland to take over its asset confiscation operation. Tartan criminals must be shaking already.

This suggested move comes as the home office continues to grapple with a growing transatlantic row over the failure to extradite London solicitor Andrew Warren to face fraud charges in New York despite the fact that he supposedly waived opposition to being extradited in 2000. Since then Warren has continued to fight extradition largely on the basis of a series of sick notes. This has infuriated the Manhattan DA's office which has successfully extradited – from Florida – and convicted Warren's partner and fellow lawyer Stuart Creggy who is due to be sentenced next month.

Initially the New York authorities requested the extradition of both men from Britain for their role in establishing and administering offshore companies used in Wall Street pump 'n' dump scams by brokers linked to organised crime. But Creggy saved them the trouble by foolishly visiting his Florida home.

Warren stayed home but supposedly prevented a lengthy extradition battle by agreeing to face charges in New York. On that basis the Americans dropped their request. But instead of enforcing the supposed deal the home office has since claimed it is powerless to put the sick Warren on the plane. Sceptical New Yorkers suspect that the home office does not really like extraditing British citizens, especially to face hard US prison time.

The federal authorities in New York will be hoping the home office will not show similar sympathy as and when it requests the extradition of septuagenarian South African hotelier Stanley Tollman, a close friend of Chelsea chairman Ken Bates, on tax fraud charges. Tollman is living in a Belgravia apartment but no doubt has doctors as well as lawyers standing by.

He was initially indicted last April. A second updated indictment was filed in November containing evidence acquired in London and Guernsey. The feds have indicted his son and named his wife as an unindicted participant in the scam, all part of ratcheting up the pressure on Tollman to return voluntarily.

If this does not work the US will have to press the extradition button and prepare for the long haul. None of which will be good news for Master Bates, whose name features in the Tollman case as do those of his long-time Guernsey bankers Royal Bank of Canada and Chelsea auditors Saffrey Champness.

Followers of the long-standing mystery of the majority offshore shareholding in Chelsea Village have suspected that this was linked to Tollman, a one-time director of the soccer club, and that the reorganisation of that holding last year might not be unrelated to the US indictment. The feds, lead by the IRS, are chasing Tollman's assets. How embarrassing would that be if these turned out to include or to have included control of his old pal Ken's pride and joy?

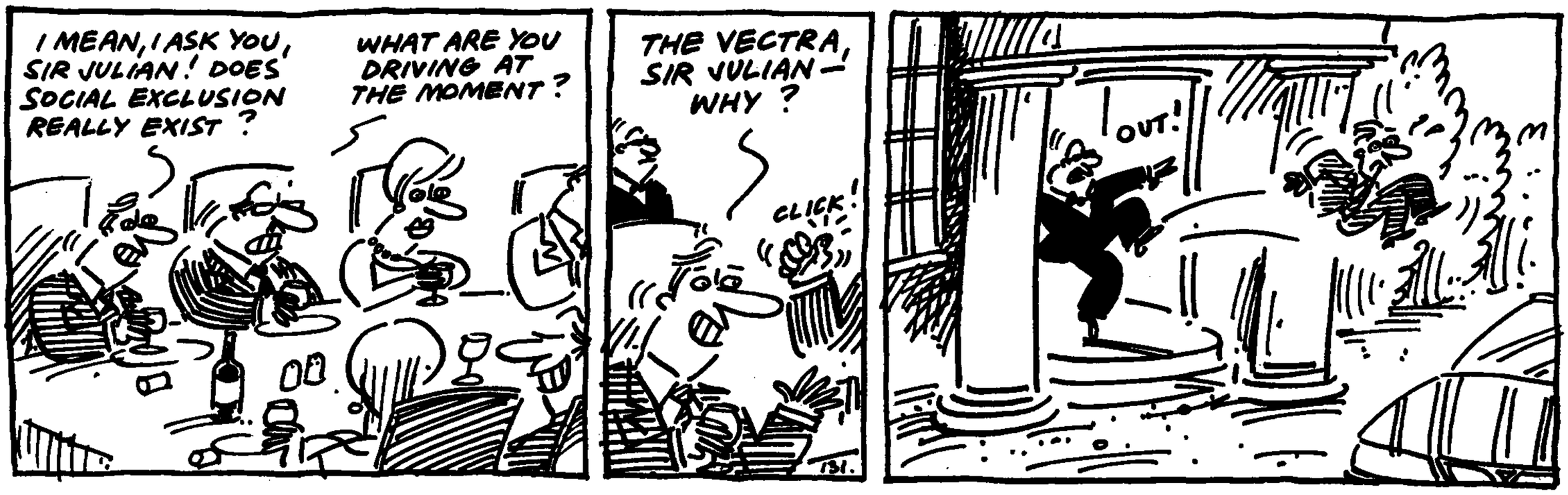
WHEN the government embarks later this year on a parliamentary battle royal over its proposals for removing juries from long and complex fraud trials – such as the £40m Wickes fiasco – much familiar nonsense will be spoken about the sanctity of juries and their right to be wrong.

None of this argument will be hampered by any evidence from actual jurors as to how they reach decisions because it is a criminal offence to interview jurors and publish their views on specific cases.

How refreshing to realise therefore that the courts in Texas are being asked to allow filming of jury deliberations in a murder case where the death penalty could apply. The trial judge has

THE DIRECTORS

DREDGE & RIGG


I MEAN, I ASK YOU, SIR JULIAN! DOES SOCIAL EXCLUSION REALLY EXIST?
WHAT ARE YOU DRIVING AT THE MOMENT?
THE VECTRA, SIR JULIAN — WHY?
CLICK!
OUT!

Stock Horror

by 'Bruin'

"Making life taste bitter..."

Value of £100 invested five years ago in...

agreed, as have the defendant's lawyers. Only the prosecution has objected and appealed the state trial judge's decision.

Nor is this the first time filming of jury deliberations in a US criminal trial has been allowed. This has happened three times before without any evidence from jurors, judges or lawyers that the remote controlled cameras made any difference.

But what does that prove against the British argument that decisions are best based on ignorance of what happens in the jury room?

"Sod your IFA's advice! I want a decent night's sleep"

ONCE again it is awards time at the Gnome Institute for Greed Management. Sadly this year the awards have been dominated by Americans because in the US even the frauds are bigger and better.

Crook of the Year was without doubt Lord Ashcroft's friend and benefactor Dennis Kozlowski of Tyco International who was so cheap he had the company pay his charitable contributions. UK runners up were Jared Brook and Lincoln Fraser of Imperial Consolidated, which has cost investors £200m.

Escaper of the Year was Gary Winnick, of fallen telecom star Global Crossing, who will not be prosecuted – perhaps because of his generous decision to donate $25m to compensate employees who lost their pensions from the $730m he netted from selling shares in the company.

Newcomer of the Year was former cowboy Bernie Ebbers of WorldCom who built a multi-billion empire on debt and compliant directors and auditors who allowed him to borrow $400m of company money but has yet to face any charges. UK runner-up: Virendra Rastogi of fantasy financiers RBG, who may have separated banks from £400m with a new slant on the Ponzi circular money fraud.

Comeback of the Year went to the very home-grown Dr Gerald Smith, who after doing time for pension fraud 10 years ago has reappeared behind the asset-stripping Orb Estates now under the SFO's gaze.

The Suit of the Year Award also stayed at home with chief executive Graham Wallace of Cable & Wireless winning the prize for the greatest destruction of shareholder value at £20bn with an honourable mention to the entire board of Aberdeen Asset Management for their achievements with the billions lost in split capital trusts.

As Frank Sinatra once sang, yes, it was a very good year.

'Slicker'

VERY LATE DTI NEWS

THE department of trade and industry has again refused to initiate an inquiry into Ernst & Young's liquidation and administration of the JS Bass group of packaging companies in 1988 (see *Eyes passim*), about which new and disturbing details are still emerging.

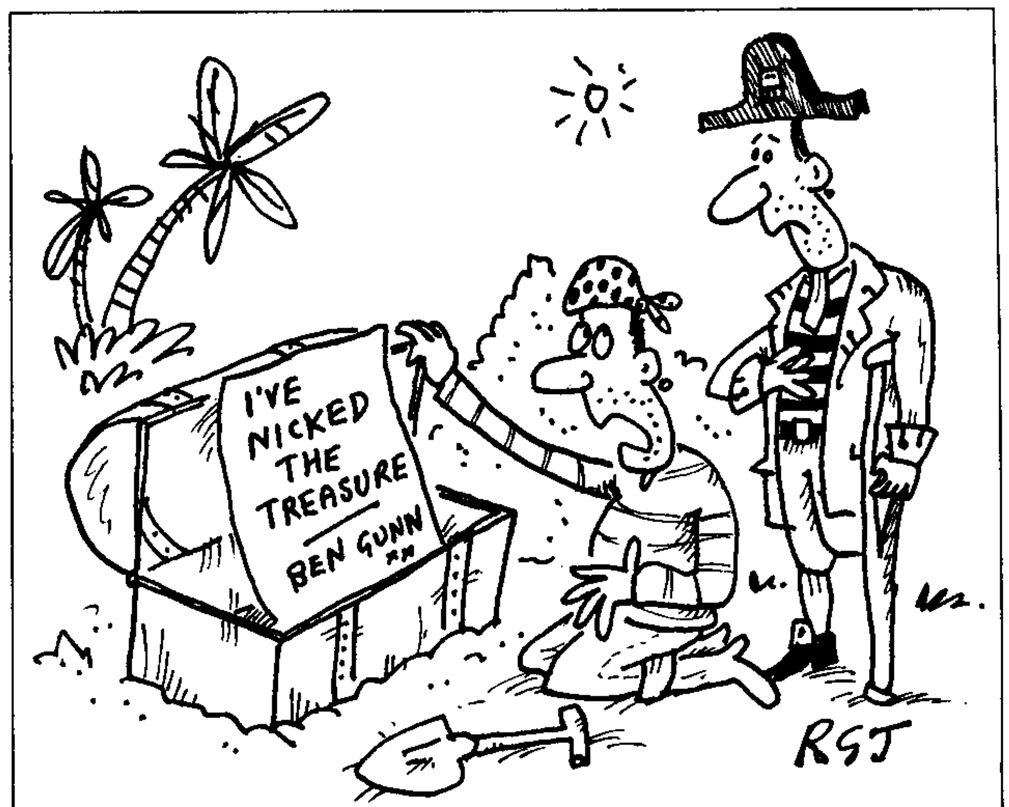
An initial report into JS Bass by the accountancy firm massively overestimated the group's losses and prompted its liquidation, which E&Y then handled in return for well over £1m in fees.

There is no trace of any administration order for JS Bass ever having been heard or granted by any court, but Ernst & Young still went ahead, sacking staff and disposing of assets and property at way below market value. Tens of thousands of pounds were also removed from trading accounts — a fact that has never been properly explained. Inconveniently, 27 invoice files that Ernst & Young claims would back up the adjusted accounts have gone missing.

In the past year it has emerged that many essential legal documents are missing from bundles of papers lodged at Manchester district court, while many others have been added, including copies of signed minutes of meetings that could not have taken place.

All of this has been pointed out to trade minister Melanie Johnson in letters from Austin Mitchell MP, who has now requested a "full, urgent and far-reaching" DTI investigation.

After careful study of Mitchell's allegations, Melanie Johnson replied that the DTI "see no reason to initiate an inquiry." Barrie Chapman, who lost his job along with JS Bass's 130 employees, will fight on.



"There seems to be an unexpected shortfall in our pension fund, Long John"

Crystal Balls

JUST how good are the best-paid financial forecasters in the City? The GMB has gathered together the predictions of the leading firms of the level at which the FTSE index of the top 100 companies would end the year. All but one predicted a rise from the starting point of 5217 – the index actually suffered its third biggest fall in the last 200 years, ending up at

3940

Company	Forecast	Percentage Error
Gerrard	6350	58%
Deutsch Bank	6200	55%
Lehman Brothers	6000	50%
Morgan Stanley	6000	50%
L& G Investments	6000	50%
CSFB	5900	47%
7 Investment Management	5800	45%
NatWest	5800	45%
ABN Amro	5800	45%
UBS Warburg	5750	43%
HSBC	5700	42%
SG Asset Management	5650	41%
Foreign and Colonial	5600	40%
Goldman Sachs	5500	37%
Merrill Lynch	5500	37%
Charterhouse Securities	5200	30%

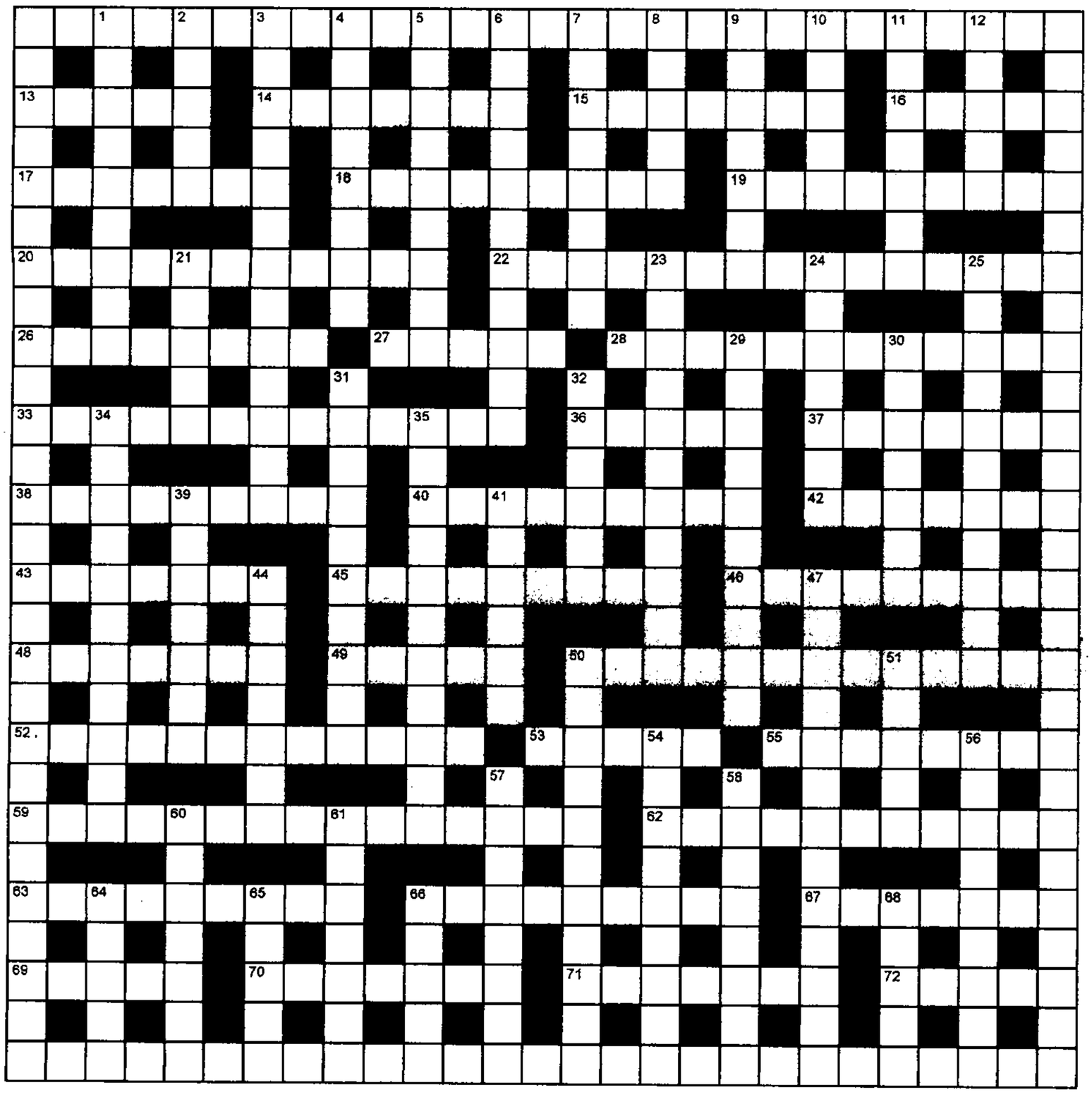
YOBS

HUSBAND

EYE CROSSWORD 226

£250 PRIZE

by Cyclops



Starting at the top LH square and running clockwise round the perimeter of the grid is a well-known ditty (with a small grammatical correction towards the end) celebrating a lack of old enemies. (6,3,4,3,3,4,7,3,3,3,4,5,7,2,8,7,3,4,3,8,3,2,4,2,3)

ACROSS

13 Just look at that bloke's dramatic willy with large head! (5)
14 Party girl with a large arse going topless (7)
15 Bill arrested by Florida cops for failing to stay up (7)
16 Long Archer-style story about 'the end of justice' (5)
17 Stones' *Charlies Competent on the Inside* lacks interest (7)
18 Said young woman has sex and sets one on the wrong path (9)
19 Rather spicy small thong is right off (9)
20 Queen-like in drag, given means of keeping one's hands to oneself (4-7)
22 They're well filled out, weeds (3,5,7)
26 *Butt Scratchers* (no centre section) magazines (8)
27 Hand grabbing Sarah's top – David's work? (5)
28 Camouflaged insect as pedestrian minister (7,5)
33 Quite the opposite of Archer? Not Tony, imbecile! (2,3,8)
36 After one night stand, live with crossword setter Benjamino (5)
37 "Stick one on one," as a too keen Brenda might do ceremoniously? (7)
38 Inept, phoney corporate stink – tongue cut off (9)
40 "Top grade piss" admits Piano Hire King, source of inspiration for weighty theory (5-4)
42 Make an impression on sports field with s-sexy lay (4-3)
43 Shortie's crap as a shoplifter (7)
45 Snaps point from tit for reproduction (9)
46 Held by commuter accountant wearing knickers with elasticated top? (9)
48 Tales of mythical feats or feet (7)
49 Be inclined to imbibe the last being only half pissed (5)
50 Firm has chance meeting with IDS finally only to get Conservative tale of woe (4,4,5)
52 Cowboy Waugh nestles up to firm tits on Brenda (6-6)
53 Bollocks unknown on cow (5)
55 I'm Euro MP – cock-up in store (8)
59 Put under strain when Chirac upset by Tone messing with EC dateline, right? (7,8)
62 Ian's edited *Balls*? He's going to shortly (2,1,8)
63 Tiffany's beer habit we hear (9)
66 Cutting out Alastair Campbell's leader (article replaced by Cyclops) (9)
67 One politician for every individual charge (7)
69 Fall off Circle and District (5)
70 Alan Clark endlessly screwed student out of town (7)
71 Brenda to return gallery's sex pictures? (7)
72 Ex-minister has the main flipping device for getting online (5)

DOWN

1 Pre-arranged bangs from these bimbos met with irritation (4,5)
2 Bilko still drawing large numbers? (5)
3 Gobbling kitchen waste on bun – the sods responsible are going to suffer! (5,4,4)
4 Pam's bust number two's without a crafty companion (8)
5 Flanks presented by kerb-crawlers to their quarry – readiness to get screwed (9)
6 To vocalise pain requires guts as a wimp (6-5)
7 Bad taste section not seen by audience (3-5)
8 They're sat with head, no longer abandoned (5)
9 Release comes from kinky sex (a clue's pointless) (7)
10 Tree that's more like Iain Duncan Smith when topped (5)
11 Tony: one to crack after the French assault (3,4)
12 Arab worker should be put inside, I say (5)
21 Shrink gets sack – caught getting gobbled (5)
23 With a month inside, endlessly urinate – awful alternative for a beginner (11)
24 Old writer's said to be the cause of discomfort to dogs (7)
25 Strip off with Diane? It's got nothing on Fats Waller's style (6,5)
29 Old leader inside Ulrika is, er, "billy-goat" (6,4)
30 "Beats having spots" – Dicky (4,3)
31 Gathers it's regular pain in the arse (10)
32 Urge ex-BBC boss, say, to be king (6)
34 No local store offers gonads – trip to be arranged to top of town (7,4)
35 Having nothing on and positioned over a dangling tip (2,1,5,3)
39 Blair ominously starts with Brown in charge of scientific study (7)
41 Dump Ron Todd inside quick! (6)
44 Ludicrous erection squeezes one blue ... (7)
47 ... – main condom (IUC) bust, so unable to have intercourse (13)
50 Mincing southern (not northern) arse's "being kept firmly in one's place" (5-6)
51 Makes out Seaman's "gutted" by defensive blunder(s) (5)
54 Colin Powell's last to upset Bush's finale, giving very little cover (9)
56 "Bjork rocks" – docker (9)
57 Stones don't exist as far as these performers are concerned (8)
58 Held by manicurist in a frigging long queue (4-4)
60 Easy on pisspoor Labour (2,5)
61 "Are oil spills the start of anarchy?" – Bush (7)
64 Goods might be on this 'PA' alternative to hooker (5)
65 Publicity over Clinton's endless erection: "improvised intercourse" (2,3)
66 Police broadcast shit as heroin is exported (5)
68 Solicitors and sanctimonious politicians (5)

£250 prize to first solution opened on 17.1.03
Entries to 'Crossword', Private Eye,
6 Carlisle Street, London W1D 3BN.

Solution to Crossword No. 225

Winner: DAVID CHEEPEN

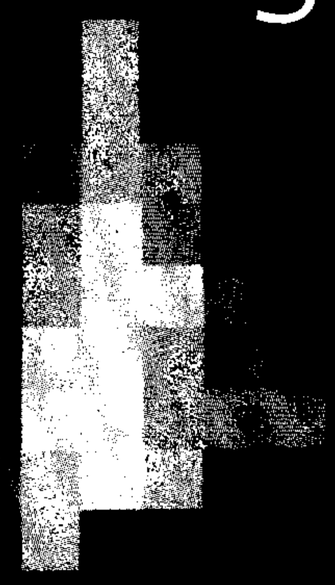
ACROSS: 1 Majorca 5 Wank off 9/11 There Ain't No Sanity Clause 10 Get on 13 Pipits 14 Verbatim 17 Rigidity 19 Isobar 22 Christmas carol 25 Ultra 26 Loan shark 27 Tiddles 28 Desktop.

DOWN: 1 Mate 2 Joe Soap 3 Re-enacted 4 Acidic 5 Wat Tyler 6 Nigel 7 On trust 8 Finger-mark 12 Sperm count 15 Bus passes 16 Stumbles 18 Gyrated 20 Buoyant 21 Oswald 23 Stall 24 Skip.

SIEMENS

obile

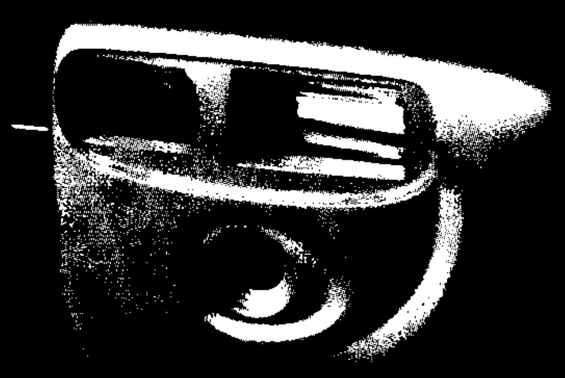
Score big



Say it with 8080 pixels. The new smoothly designed Siemens S55 with Quick Pic Camera and flash. Take a picture. Add sound. Add text. Then send it all instantly.

S55

Be inspired



SUBSCRIBE TO PRIVATE EYE

SAVE OVER £12*

It's only £19.00 for 26 ISSUES delivered to your door by 1st class post each fortnight, at no extra charge.

*On the annual UK cover price.

Please complete the forms below or call our credit card hotline on 0870 750 1714
(Overseas callers: +44 (0) 1795 414 871)

I would like to subscribe to PRIVATE EYE.
Please send the magazine to:

Title Initial Surname

Address

Postcode

Your daytime telephone no:
(in case we have a query with the order)

Your email:

❑ UK £19.00 ❑ Europe & Eire £27.00 ❑ Rest of World £35.00
Overseas subscribers can also pay by International Money Order

❑ I enclose a Sterling cheque made payable to PRIVATE EYE or

❑ Please charge my MasterCard / Visa / Switch (issue no:)

Card number :

SWITCH ONLY

Expiry date :

Signature

OR subscribe by Direct Debit. Complete the form below (UK subscribers only).

DIRECT Debit

☐ Please debit my account with £19.00 annually.

Instruction to your Bank or Building Society
Please pay PRIVATE EYE Direct Debits from the account detailed in this Instruction subject to the safeguards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with PRIVATE EYE and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my Bank/Building Society.

Originator's identification no: 768 299

EYE reference no: (for office use only)

Name of bank:

Address of bank:

Postcode:

Name of account holder:

Account no: Sort code:

Signature Date:

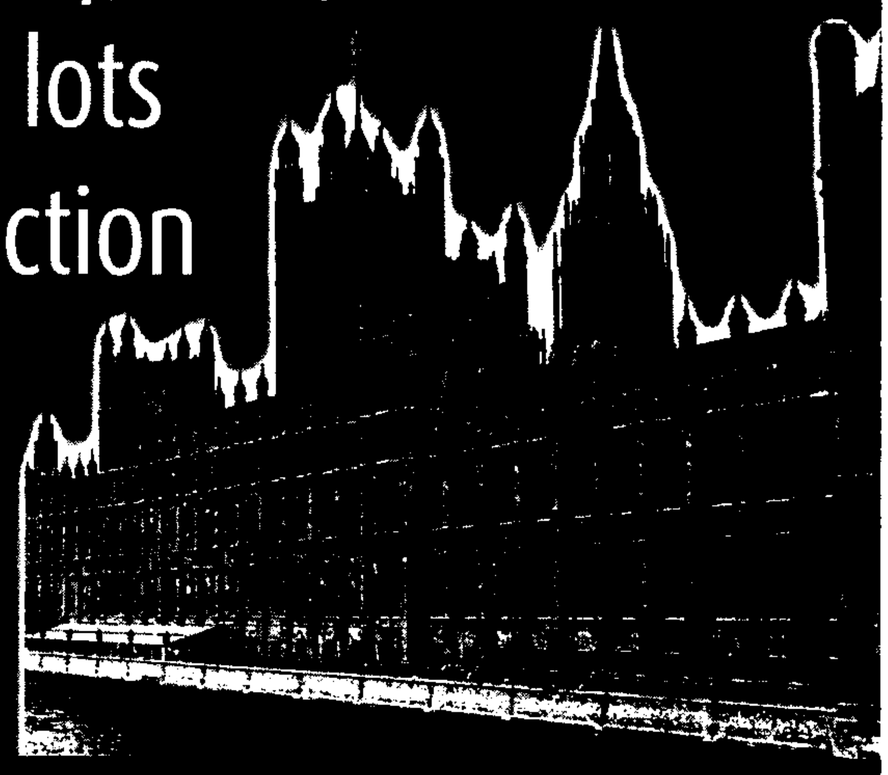
Banks and Building Societies may not accept Direct Debit Instructions for some types of account.

The Direct Debit Guarantee: This guarantee is offered by all Banks and Building Societies that take part in the Direct Debit Scheme. The efficiency and security of the scheme is monitored and protected by your own Bank or Building Society. If the amounts to be paid or the payments dates change PRIVATE EYE will notify you 10 working days in advance of your account being debited or as otherwise agreed. If an error is made by PRIVATE EYE or your Bank/Building Society, you are guaranteed a full and immediate refund from your branch of the amount paid. You can cancel a Direct Debit at any time, by writing to your Bank or Building Society. Please also send a copy of your letter to us.

Send your application and payment/direct debit details to:
PRIVATE EYE Subscriptions, P.O. Box 326, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8FA.
Please allow up to three weeks for delivery of your first subscription issue.
For enquiries please call 0870 750 1714 N1071

FOYLES

History, Law, Politics... and lots of fiction



020 7437 5660 020 7434 1574

orders@foyles.co.uk www.foyles.co.uk

113-119 Charing Cross Road, London
(2 minutes from Tottenham Court Road Underground Station)

PERU

Gold mask recovered from huaqueros (looters) by police which led to the discovery of the spectacular Moche tombs at Sipan, on the Pacific littoral.

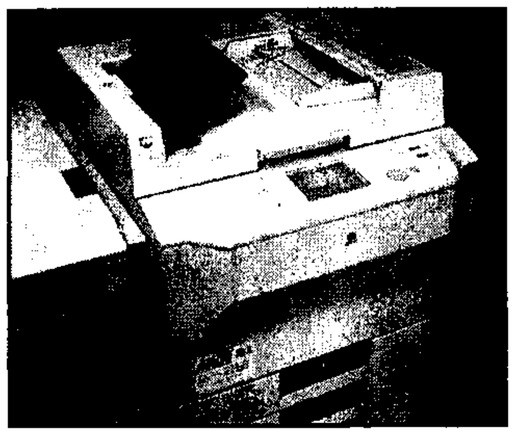
2003 Andante TRAVELS

TRAVEL WITH THE EXPERTS
it's the detail that makes the difference

www.andantetravels.co.uk 01722 713800

AITO THE ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT TOUR OPERATORS

Ford Ka 1.3i. R reg in excellent condition. Bankruptcy. Auction price **£1,900.**



Minolta Photocopier. 1 year old. Perfect working order. Liquidation Sale. Auction price **£22.**

2 bedrooms. 3 miles to sea. Lincolnshire. Repossession. Auction price **£8,300.**

Every month GOVERNMENT AUCTION NEWS *will guide you to thousands of bargains like these...*

A single divan bed - as new £20 (worth £150) ... a DVD player with remote control £36 (£170) ... an S reg Volvo V40, 36,000 miles £3,900 (£7,000) ... an Indesit fridge/freezer, 'frost free' in good condition £5 (£200+ new) ... a circular dining table with four chairs, in beech £140 (£600) ... 48 pieces of solid silver and silver plate cutlery £13 (£400 after cleaning and sorting) ... a Roberts retro radio £7 (worth £60+)...

The above examples were all gathered by our reporters and readers during 2002.

Every month readers of Government Auction News receive details of over 1,000 hard-to-find auctions. Many of these are 'no reserve' auctions where the goods must be sold regardless of how low the winning bid. If you want to learn where to find thousands of bargains every bit as good as these examples then send for a RISK-FREE TRIAL ISSUE of Government Auction News today, and save £20.

Why auction prices are so low.

People sell at auction when they are in a hurry. Perhaps they don't want to store the goods any more, or maybe they need the money urgently, or possibly they haven't the facilities to deal with prospective buyers. Whatever the reason, the result is that auction prices represent some unbelievable bargains.

The BIG secret.

Auctions of the type covered by Government Auction News don't get publicised because a) the auctioneers don't make enough profit to make it worth their while and b) most bidders are 'trade' and they don't want extra competition. The one proven way to discover where these auctions are is to read Government Auction News.

Types of auction covered.

Police lost property - Ministry of Defence - Official Liquidator & Receiver - Bankrupt stock - General & Trade - HM Customs & Excise - Antique & Collectibles - Wine - Jewellery - Motor - Property - Executor sales of deceased estates - and more besides. We also cover internet auctions.

Send for a RISK-FREE TRIAL ISSUE

We'll be pleased to send you a trial issue of Government Auction News which is packed not just with auction listings but also features, news, tips, articles, advice and investigative reports. Take up our offer and you'll save £20 in your first year. You will be covered by our 30 day no-quibble money-back guarantee.

Do not confuse us with other titles - there is only one Government Auction News as featured by The Sunday Times, The Independent, BBC Radio, and many more.

Any questions? Call 020 8597 0181

Government Auction News is published 12 times a year by Wentworth Publishing Ltd, 17 Fleet St., London EC4Y 1AA
©2002 ISSN 0995-1034

Credit Card Hotline 020 8597 0181

SUBSCRIPTION APPLICATION

Please send me my first issue of ***Government Auction News****. I wish to take advantage of the new subscriber discount. 30 day money-back guarantee if not delighted.*

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

_____ POSTCODE _____

Send to ***Government Auction News,***
FREEPOST (SE8648), Romford RM6 5BR

1558 Official Use Only - Membership no. ____

Please pay to Natwest Bank plc (60-19-26), PO Box 3041, 34 Sloane Square, London SW1W 8AZ, Wentworth Publishing Ltd a/c 88957659, on receipt of this order the sum of thirty nine pounds fifty pence only. Thereafter, commencing on the first anniversary of this order, please pay fifty nine pounds fifty pence annually, until countermanded by me.

TO _____ BANK

SORTCODE ____ – ____ – ____

BANK ADDRESS _____

_____

_____ POSTCODE _____

ACCOUNT NAME _____

ACCOUNT NUMBER _____

DATE

SIGNATURE

We hope to recommend other products and services to you. If you don't wish to receive details please tick this box ☐.

specialEYEs

meeting people

www.ivorytowers.net

The new intelligent online **friendship and matchmaking site**, for alumni, postgraduates and students of all eras.

It's a new way of doing an old thing.

Free Trial Period

clubs

The
Blue Angel Club

welcomes you and your friends for a really unforgettable evening. Drink, or dine and dance in luxurious surroundings and be served or entertained by our Angels.

Open Monday to Friday from 6.30pm until late

Membership not required.

17 Little Portland Street, London W1N 5DE Tel: 020 7636 2178

Looking for somewhere to advertise?
communications team **T: 020 7923 5416**

gifts

Don't send Flowers...
send r-fur
and your message will last forever...
Whatever the occ
you care, send the
carries your personal message
his rucksack with pride and style.
And he's delivered overnight** to the destination of your choice
CALL 0870 755 7387
OR VISIT www.sendthebear.com
ONLY £35*
* Plus postage & packing
** UK Mainland next working day delivery by Royal Mail Special Delivery Service. Overseas destinations available at extra cost
Approx 20cm tall. r-fur © Be Bear Designs 2002 - all rights reserved.

BIRTHDAY NEWSPAPERS

Births, Birthdays, Weddings, Christenings, Anniversaries, Retirements. Papers from archives 1642-2002. Sundays from 1915. Quality presentations. Same day dispatch.

REMEMBER WHEN

445 Brighton Road, Croydon, Surrey CR2 6EU

www.remember-when.co.uk

020 8763 6363

or call FREE 0500 520 000

OM SAI RAM

BESPOKE

SUITS & SHIRTS

Hours 10.00am to 8.00pm (By appointment only.) Please Email, fax or call us in HONG KONG for an appointment with MR.RAJA DASWANI or alternatively call his suite during his visit. If Mr Daswani is unavailable or not checked in when you call, please leave your Tel number and he will be glad to return your call. *APPOINTMENTS CAN ALSO BE TAKEN FOR UK VENUES ON TEL: 01635 574 233*

A suit that measures up

...at a price you can afford

LADIES

1 Wool Suit
1 Silk Blouse

All from £188

GENTS

1 Super Fine Wool Suit
1 Blazer or Sports Jacket
1 Matching Pair of Slack
2 Silk ties

All from £188

COME ALONG FOR A FITTING

Raja Daswani will be offering his unique tailoring service at the following venues:

London – Sheraton Park Tower, 101 Knightsbridge, London
Jan 20-26 Tel: 020 7235 8050 Fax: 020 7235 8231

London – Four Seasons Hotel, 46 Westferry Circus, Canary Wharf, London E14 8RS
Jan 27-29 Tel: 020 7510 1999 Fax: 020 7510 1998

London – Novotel London Tower Bridge, 10 Pepys St, London EC3N 2NR
Jan 27-29 Tel: 020 7265 6000 Fax: 020 7265 6060

Birmingham – Hyatt Regency Birmingham, 2 Bridge St, Birmingham B1 2JZ
Jan 30-31 Tel: 0121 643 1234 Fax: 0121 616 2323

Manchester – Renaissance Manchester Hotel, Blackfriars St, Manchester M3 2EQ
Feb 1-2 Tel: 0161 835 2555 Fax: 0161 835 3077

RAJA FASHIONS

34-C Cameron Rd., Ground Floor, Kowloon, Hong Kong

Email: raja@raja-fashions.com

URL: http://www.raja-fashions.com Tel: (852) 2366 7624 Fax: (852) 2369 2807

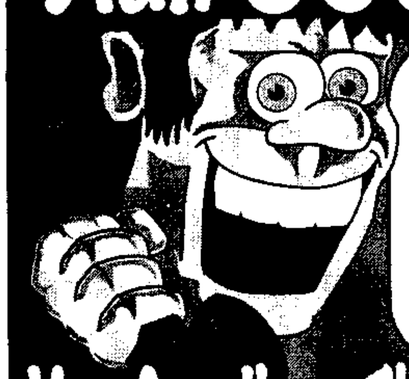
APPOINTMENTS CAN ALSO BE TAKEN FOR UK VENUES ON TEL: 01635 574 233

Customs duties and VAT not included, free alteration and replacement. No Refunds

jokelines

Listen To A Friend Being Sent Round The Bend!!

Dial: 09064 070 114



Choose A Joke

Mr Fury • Irate Delivery Driver • Invite From No.10
The Detective • Tax Inspector • The Lawyer From Hell

Dial Your Friend's Number

(Catch Your Victims At Home - In The Office
Or On Their Mobile - There Is No Escape)

When They Answer
The Joke Starts

You Can Hear Them...BUT They Can't Hear You!

Calls cost £1.50/min at all times - Phone Fun, 78 York Street, London W1H 1DP

surveillance

DO YOU *REALLY* KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON?

SUSPECT SOMETHING'S GOING ON?
FIND OUT - WITHOUT BEING FOUND OUT!

Disloyalty can be dangerous. It's often damaging and invariably hurtful. Commercially, it's usually expensive. You may not like the idea of using 'bugging' equipment but it can heighten your awareness and help you anticipate. You'll be amazed how we conceal microphones and tiny cameras in the most innocent and ordinary everyday objects.

LORRAINE ELECTRONICS SURVEILLANCE
716 Lea Bridge Road, London E10 6AW.
Fax: 020 8558 1338
Central London Showroom:
59 South Audley Street, W1K 2QN
Web Site: www.lorraine.co.uk
TEL: 020 8558 4226

Anoraks! Check it out!

It's now possible to browse through highlights of Private Eye Magazine – including cartoons, features, articles, regulars, funnies, ads & the cover at

www.private-eye.co.uk

cartoons

menu **Cartoon Gallery**

biogs
books
gallery
exhibitions

A selection of cartoons, illustrations and animated cels can be found on the **Cartoon Gallery Website**, from **Chris Riddell** to **Steve Bell, Alex** to **Appleby, Honeysett** to **Husband** and **McLachlan** to **Matt.**

The site also has extensive biographies, including **Ronald Searle** and **Kipper Williams** and the **Search by Subject** pages contain **12** categories from **Art** to **Therapy,** showing over **120** original cartoons.

All cartoons and books are dispatched within three working days via our mail order department, so..... for the speculative and gift buyer alike, please visit:

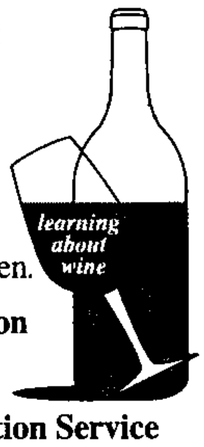
www.cartoongallery.co.uk

The Cartoon Gallery 39 Great Russell St. London WC1B 3PH
tel: 020-7636-1011 fax: 020-7436-5053 e mail: cartoongallery@easynet.co.uk

courses

Wine Courses

Enjoy learning about wine with specialist tutors in London, Manchester, Birmingham, Edinburgh & Aberdeen.



For more information contact:

The Wine Education Service
020 8423 6338
www.wine-education-service.co.uk

travel

GOING OVERSEAS ?!
Cheapest crossings with perfect accommodation

0800-1691772
info@britishferry.com

www.britishferry.com

Credit Cards

5.9% APR*

+

AIR MILES

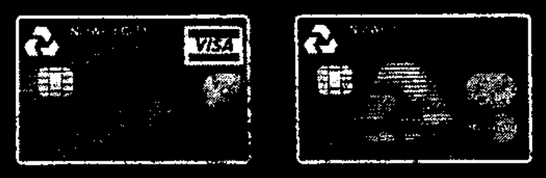
+

No Annual Fee

The benefits add up

- *Balance transfer rate of 5.9% APR for however long it takes to pay it off
- An APR of 17.4% for purchases (19.2% for advances)
- AIR MILES when you spend
- No annual fee

AIR MILES™ Travel the World



Apply for a NatWest Credit Card today

Call FREE
0800 444 252
24 hours a day, quoting reference 238719

NatWest another way

This offer is only available via the telephone number advertised. Existing NatWest Credit Cardholders are not eligible for this offer. Credit is only available to persons over the age of majority and subject to status and conditions. Written quotations are available on request. The current NatWest Credit Card monthly rate is 1.349%, equivalent to an APR of 17.4% for purchases, 19.2% for advances. The current NatWest Gold Card monthly rate is 1.277%, equivalent to an APR of 16.4% for purchases, 18.2% for advances. The minimum monthly repayment is the greater of 3% or £5 of the balance. There is an admin levy of 2.75% of the amount of each foreign currency transaction and a cash handling fee of 1.5% (minimum charge of £1.50) payable on each cash advance, purchase of foreign currency and travellers' cheques. The monthly interest rate and cash handling fee may vary. 1 AIR MILE for every £20 of spend that appears on your monthly credit card statement (excludes advances, the purchase of foreign currency or travellers' cheques, balance transfers, interest and other charges). Calls may be monitored and recorded. National Westminster Bank Plc, 135 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3UR. Registered in England No. 929027.

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

020 7837 4566

£2.40 per word (£24 min charge)
Border £12 Box Number £12
Two weeks repeated on Private Eye's Website (www.private-eye.co.uk): £10
All charges VAT inclusive
Reply to Box Numbers at address below

Deadline for next issue: Jan 15th

private-eye@communicationsteam.com
Fax: 020 7923 5401
Feedback form: www.private-eye.co.uk

Communications Team, Exmouth House, 3-11 Pine Street, London EC1R 0JH

EYE NOVELTIES & VALENTINE GIFTS

A UNIQUE PRESENT for your valentine. Cast your lips, nipples, etc., etc., etc., in chocolate, clear resin or bronze in the privacy of your own home by a professional sculptress. CALL MERCEDES 020 7630 8552.

"ON THE 7TH. DAY God firebombed McDonalds" caricature T-shirts. £9. catweazle1@onetel.net.uk

www.BrownPaper.co.uk Online Sexy Shopping: Adult Toys, Lingerie and Naughty Gifts. Automated catalogue request 0870 7443021.

STILL THE BEST collection of stocking-fillers anywhere on the net! www.gizmoandwidget.com

ADRENALINE RUSH FOR HUMANS, fly an airliner simulator with us – mteam.co.uk/flights Tel 01293 418457

6 FOOT PHOTOBANNERS – £39.95. 0121 241 7878 – ctgraphics.co.uk

GIFTS FOR THE REDHEAD IN YOUR LIFE – www.redandproud.com – Tel: 01844 274635.

TITLES – LORD, LADY etc. Tel/Fax 0800 652 6641. www.elitetitles.co.uk

WHAT'S YOUR CAT UP to while you are out? Find out with KittyCam! Visit our website: www.kittycam.co.uk

BIRTHDAY Newspapers FREE-PHONE 0800 906609 www.historic-newspapers.co.uk

PLEASURE AND INVESTMENT. Autographs and memorabilia. Call Europe's largest dealer. Freephone 0800 731 0852 or www.frasersautographs.com

PROMOTE IT with full colour postcards at competitive prices. For sample pack phone 020 7737 7766 or E-mail: cardencounters@btclick.com

EROTICA for discerning adult. Award winning videos and DVDs – hand picked titles – and the world's best sex toys. Read the reviews and test results before you buy. Fast, secure and discreet service. Over 18s only. Available from www.blissbox.com retailers of the very best erotica and sex toys www.blissbox.com

BLAIRITANNIA – IT'S LIKE LIVING ON A MUSHROOM FARM" t-shirts, plus other Political Satire t-shirts now available from folie-a-dieu.co.uk or telephone 01983 524080.

PERSONALISED CHAMPAGNE your unique message printed on the label delivered NEXTDAY nationwide £29 020 7737 8030 – www.nextdaychampagne.co.uk

EYE WEAR

VALET PARK YOUR CLOTHES! Beautiful wooden coathangers. £29.99 (20) Gnome-quibble guarantee. (01932) 342858 – www.thewoodenhanger.com

EYE COLLECT

MCGOOHAN'S PRISONER. 21st century memorabilia, publications, maps, CD, etc. www.priz.biz

OLD FOOTBALL PROGRAMMES wanted. (Pre-1960s) cash paid. Telephone: 020 8306 2194. E-mail: david.sturge@btopenworld.com

ART COLLECTION? (20+) Chagal, Monet, Matisse, Picasso, Nicholson, works by John Myatt. Exhibit/sell/ideas. Telephone 01795 583030.

EYE READ

THE EURO KICKS OUT THE POUND! True or False. New report maps history and what's next. Buy NOW and get two FREE resource guides. www.theeuro.org.uk

UNDERCOVER MEDICINE: www.undercovermedicine.com Medicine under the microscope. Launch story: the case of the doctor that some don't want you to know.

THE BLIGHT OF BLAIRISM Francis Bennion's hardback now out. Order from brianleste@aol.com

FREE BOOKSEARCH – No Purchase Obligation Twiggers Booksearch – 0208 878 8644. booksearch@twiggers.com

EYE BUYS

EYES 12, 16-27 and most to date; offers, singly or volumes – briansmith.pix@btopenworld.com

COMPLETE SET EYES plus memorabilia. All sensible offers considered - buyer collects. Box 0771.

EYES 493-1070 (only five missing, five duplicates) offers 07940 530743.

EYE SAY

MRS SIMPSON – I will happily abdicate for you if you wish. Edward R.

BOND BUILDING, Edinburgh. Problems? Want to join forces? Box 0671.

WHAT DID you call me?

WHO IS Dr Adoko? www.dradoko.com

MI5 PERSECUTION – their agents' job for life (and livelihood) is stalking me. Crime pays when redefined as National Security. www.five.org.uk

WHEN HE SANG 'The children will starve and live in fear' his voice sounded cruel.

www.faxfn.org HM Treasury – an apology: while we still think the Gateway Review Process is daft, our last advert was unnecessarily offensive.

IT'S GOOD NEWS you're not a commentary of your conscience.

EYE SELL

DONEGAL PEAT FIRE this winter. 12 x 20kg sacks – £120. Delivered. ph. 02890 838 111. Anytime.

OLD PERSIAN RUGS – mostly £100-£3000. Shed not shop – telephone first. DESMOND NORTH, East Peckham, Kent. 01622 871353.

RUSSIAN WATCH CATALOGUE available. Send £1 stamp to: Mr Tomanek, 93 Mansfield Road, Nottingham, NG1 3FN. www.russianwatches.co.uk

WE INCORPORATE COMPANIES – £98 + vat – tel: 01306 888542 www.formations365.co.uk/pe/

NEED A NEW HI-FI? For anything from DVD to Minidisc, surround sound to CD – nip down to RICHER SOUNDS and pick up the lowest-priced gear in the UK... GUARANTEED! For a free bargain-packed catalogue, call 0845 1 300 200.

HYDROPONIC GROW LIGHTS – FREE mail-order brochure – 0800 056 1875. www.growell.co.uk

FREE adult uncut DVD & VHS catalogue – send a 41p SAE to Black Dog, PO Box 34984, London SW6 4XT. EROTICA for discerning adults - www.blissbox.com

EYE HEAR

JUKEBOX PARTY HIRE. CDs and/or 7" vinyl. Including ROCKOLA BUBBLER. £140+ delivered. 020 8318 2852.

EYE HELP

MORTGAGES for people who (think they) can't get a mortgage. ABACUS MORTGAGES 01403 785725 – help@admo.co.uk

SORT IT! Obsessive-compulsive organises files, archives, libraries. Business or personal, computer or paper. Free quote. 07771 562863 – sorted@meister.com

SPEECHWRITING BY BRITAINS LEADING PROFESSIONAL. Laughter fully guaranteed! Corporate, Social, Political. Strictly confidential. Visa/Mastercard. Call MITCH MURRAY – 01624 622660.

ANTIQUES RESTORED by people who know how – www.lawrencebrass.com

IMPORTANT SPEECH or presentation? Let us help you prepare and deliver it. Video coaching to iron out glitches. Constant support and encouragement. Hugo Summerson at Speaker Skills Training. 0207 235 5785 .

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY CLAIMS. Lost out due to bad advice? Why don't you sue your adviser? Contact GORVINS SOLICITORS and we'll do it for you. FREEPHONE 0800 214531 or E-mail enquiries@gorvins.com

ACCOMMODATION address private, discreet, confidential mail/message-holding service, REGENT STREET. Established 1979. 020 7580 4242. E-mail: enquiry@hold-everything.com – www.hold-everything.com

EYE CARE

STOP SMOKING GUARANTEED. One session. Other problems sensitively addressed – 020 7357 9905.

propecianet.com – for the only clinically proven baldness cure.

FREE ON-LINE "self-improvement" newsletter. Articles, ideas and techniques from NLP, life coaching, hypnosis, influence, motivation and communication excellence. Send blank E-mail: to lifeskills@aweber.com and begin to live the live of your dreams.

CLINICAL NEGLIGENCE CLAIMS – Lost out due to incompetence? Why don't you sue? Contact GORVINS And we'll do it for you. FREE-PHONE 0800 214531 or E-mail enquiries@gorvins.com

ERECTION PROBLEMS? solved. Delivered tomorrow – effective 30 minutes. lowest prices. Telephone 01299 250464.

LADIES, PAMPER YOURSELF! South coast TLC doctor/ masseur offers you ultimate personal care. E-mail: verydiscreteforu@aol.com

THE ERECTION PERFECTION pill. Testosterone creams for men/women - enhances sexual ability and libido. EUROMED 0701 071 8424.

EYE TECH

SMS TEXT MARKETING WORKS! text 077 66 40 41 42 with the word "eye" to receive info. Or visit http://sms.a-q.co.uk

COMPUTER TROUBLE? let a genuine pc expert help you with advice, installation, setup, programming and trouble-shooting – and save yourself some big headaches. Call TOBY on 020 7229 3001 for friendly, professional advice.

EYE DETECT

LINK INVESTIGATIONS – Private And Commercial Investigators Tracing, Surveillance, Staff Vetting, Matrimonial, Debugging, geology, house checks, DNA checks etc. Tel: 01306 880707 Fax: 01306 888077 E-mail: info@linkinvestigations.co.uk Web Site: www.linkinvestigations.co.uk

EYE PROTECT

SURVEILLANCE EQUIPMENT – Manufacturer & Supplier of surveillance equipment. GSM Infinity Room Bug £199.00 – 'PC Spy' Hardware based no software £59.00 – Professional Bug Detectors from only £199.00 – 9 Hour Digital Recorder for use in meetings and for telephones £149.00. WWW.SPYSTOREUK.COM Tel: 0208-968-0227, E-Mail: info@spystoreuk.com

EYE LEARN

TEFL CERTIFICATE (genuine) plus teaching manual, only £95. Details: teflcertificate@yahoo.com

GNOME STUDY – cartooning courses with EYE cartoonists. Learn at home by mail or from CD-ROM – www.draw-cartoons.com – or telephone 01785 250700.

EYE HOMES

WEST CORK ISLAND PUB FOR SALE, escape the ratrace, www.cartersbar.com

EYE WORK

46 Y.O. DIR. of const. mtl. manufacturer c/w 20 years broad successful sales, mktg, gen. mgmt exp. in bldg & const. sector inc. 15 years export/expatriate status seeks new focus, challenge & hopefully change of direction for reasonable remun. pkg. Energetic, flexible, resourceful with developable languages. Midlands based but re-locatable. Ideas/offers to "newopp2003@hotmail.com".

EYE EARN

MAKE BIG PROFITS from futures trading - www.betting-on-a-fortune.co.uk

COMPUTER & INTERNET users wanted. Work from home on-line. No experience needed. Full training and support – www.4rapidsuccess.com

£2,100 PROFIT in 4 working days - tax free! We show you how its done, and how you can potentially achieve similar results. If you already buy and sell shares you should definitely visit us. www.financialspreadbets.info

ESCAPE THE RAT RACE – www.iwantmorethanthis.com – 0151-728 9435.

PROVEN ACTION PLAN for net success – www.superb-earnings.co.uk

DOUBLE YOUR WAY to £1 million! Free Report. Large SAE to MEFA(P) PO Box 1812, Salisbury SP5 2UB.

FREE REPORT ON WEB MARKETING without a website or even a computer. Harness the power of the web without the fuss. E-mail: northshawmarketing@getresponse.com or ring Ian on 07939 175505.

EYE BET

IDEAL RACING – for professional horse racing information Tel. 0871 711 0431 recorded message. Write PO Box 27267, London N11 1XD

EYE FINANCE

"DREAM CATCHER" – a romantic comedy western written by Ken Kitson, set in Yorkshire, commending 7th July 2003, requires added finance for this forthcoming Feature Film. For details contact: Ken Kitson Writer/Actor. E-mail: kkp.ip@amserve.net. Mobile: 07711 235989.

MADE REDUNDANT, 20/12/02 – urgently require investors for new property company. Customers waiting. Quick profits. Contact Clive Evans: 01823 442160.

MATURE FEMALE SOUGHT as business partner in adult market. Exciting possibilities including Florida escorted tours. No financial investment – just broadminded and businessminded. Phone 07968 125120.

EYE NEED

TEENAGE LOVERS NEED CASH to elope. Thanks! Lloyds/TSB 30-94-44, 00553170.

HELP ME SMILE AGAIN. An awful lot of money required for major dental reconstructive surgery. Thanks to negligent parent and phobia about dentists. Just discovered that there are new possibilities in this field. Any amount gratefully received to Halifax 11 05 03, Account 00446570

NHS PARAMEDIC seeks financial help to avoid bankruptcy. 40-47-87 23014932.

RESCUED SLOVAK CATS in quarantine and pregnant owner need help desperately. Barclays 20-47-61, 60050504.

PLEASE HELP ME treat my partner to the present she deserves - aiming for Sydney and don't want to only make Skeggy. All donations received with sincere and heartfelt gratitude. Please help me prove that romance isn't dead: Barclays, Sort Code 20-41-12, Acct No 90626287.

DIAGNOSED CLINICALLY DEPRESSED Please help: FirstDirect 40-47-81 30126535 Thank You.

HIGH VET BILLS – charity animal clinic needs funds – RBS-16-20-38 10022270.

PLEASE HELP ME rebuild life after nervous breakdown. Nationwide 07-01-16, 19163109.

CANCER: 8 MONTHS LEFT. Don't wish to wait/rot. Dream: worldwide trip. Hospitality offers: lastjourney@btinternet.com, donations: FirstDirect 40-47-84 40825719.

EYE WANT

MOTHERS-IN-LAW. Researcher seeks stories of things she does that grate. Please send to motherinlawstories@yahoo.co.uk

EYE MOVES

MOVING STUFF. Transit couriers and light removals professional, insured. 020 7622 0511.

JAMES MOVES your possessions. Household / office. Boxes / storage available. 020 8208 1497.

EYE ESCAPE

LUXURY VILLA HOLIDAY? Rent direct from the owners. Most with pools. www.villalynx.com

MALLORCAN PROPERTIES - 00 34 660 980 556. Not all estate agents are Bestards. www.cjbestard.com

YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION! Try the real thing @ Colwall Park Hotel, Malvern. Gourmet breaks from £69.95pppn 2+nts. 01684 540000 – www.colwall.com

TRULY AUSTRALIA, truly different. Tailor-make your own holiday. Visit– www.trulyAustralia.com

TENERIFE RESORT DIRECTOR. Superb studios, apartments, duplexes and villas in the South of Tenerife. Save up to 60% off brochure prices. Customer Services: 0845 601 8132. Website: www.teneriferesortdirector.com – E-mail: enq@teneriferesortsdirector.com

www.island-retreat.com – Hidden treasure... Caribbean... Great escape.

REALITY? Find freedom and purity living in our Spanish idyll. www.vergel-alpujarra.com

GREECE – CYCLADES ISLANDS. Mykonos (direct flights), Paros, Naxos, Ios, Santorini – plus a dozen quiet ones. SIMPLY SPECIAL. Simply Simon Holidays. ATOL 2578, 020 7373 1933.

CORNWALL, ST. IVES. 2 bed flat 150m beach and coastpath. Stroll to harbour and Tate. www.stives1st.co.uk, 01225 484898.

EYE FLY

WORLDWIDE LOWEST prices – allegedly! Tel: 01942 603599 / 680268. Fax: 01942 670868. Agents ATOL holders.

FLIGHT OPTIONS – telephone booking service. Tel: 01432 851062, Fax 01432 850722. HENRY ROGERS, ATOL 3793.

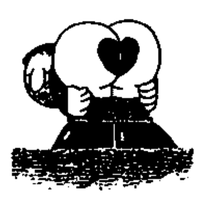
EYE CONTACT

SPEED DATING – the fun new way to meet and date lots of people in one night. www.speeddater.co.uk 020 8452 5719.

MAKE INTERESTING NEW FRIENDS UK/WORLDWIDE. Free details. DESTINY HEART (Dept PE) PO Box 10, Leeds, LS12 1YZ.

ATTACHED? SEEKING ROMANCE? Call David at LOVINGLINKS 020 7602 8727. Info line 0906 550 1361 (call cost £1 a minute)– www.lovinglinks.co.uk Discreet dating at the speed of E-mail.

VALENTINE MESSAGES 2003



FREE CHAMPAGNE FOR YOU & YOUR VALENTINE!

Write your loved-one a romantic, fanciful, extravagant, funny, cheeky, cryptic, silly, absurd, Valentine message for publication in the EYE VALENTINES issue.

OUR FAVOURITE WINS TWO BOTTLES OF PRIVATE EYE PERSONALISED HIS'N'HERS VINTAGE CHAMPAGNE, delivered to your door!

SPECIAL RATE! £2 per word (minimum £12)

DEADLINE JANUARY 30th! Post, E-mail or phone to address on page 36 or use the order form at 'classifieds' on www.private-eye.co.uk and mark your entry 'VALENTINE'.

NATURAL FRIENDS, where relationships just click. Free brochure 0800 281 933 www.natural-friends.com

BEAUTIFUL THAILAND – the Personal Agency for meeting and marrying Thai Ladies. Tel: 01745 730571 or visit www.beau-thai.co.uk

FLIRT LINE. Call: 09099 100 143 www.phoneflirts.co.uk 75p per min from a BT land line. PO Box 189 CA4 8GW

FANTASY LINE – Phone: 09099 100 146 – www.downtowngirl.co.uk 75p min from bt landline. PO Box 182 CT11 8GT

RUSSIAN LADIES SEEK RELATIONSHIP / marriage. Introductions in UK. Affordable trips to Moscow/St. Petersburg. Unlimited introductions. Excellent success rate. Phone IFM 01708 478697.

ADDITIONS – 'ATTACHED' Discreet Loving Agency for married people. 020 8905 3304, 020 8958 9657.

LONESOME OXBRIDGE BLUES? Why not meet somebody new at www.BluesMatch.com

LIVE PSYCHIC 0906 734 3707**. Chat & Date 0906 752 6299*,Live 1-2-1 Chat 0906 734 3206**, Gay Chat 0906 952 6006*, Adult Contact Ads 0905 235 5819**, http://www.harmonypartners.co.uk - PO Box 17,Ashford,TN23 7YQ. Calls cost *75p/**£1/min from BT Landlines.

THAI CONNECTION – Thailand's oldest agency celebrates 650 marriages. Videos, brochure: 01582 481725.

ASIAN PARTNERS: Suman Marriage Bureau. Established 1972. Member ABIA. 020 8571 5145 or www.suman-online.com

Findyourperfectpartner.com - you may just click! Our MutualMatch system is the world's most accurate. 7-day free full membership

NEW ETHICAL AGENCY introduces your ideal wife. THAI PARTNERS. Brochure, video 07810 562024 – kthcastell@aol.com

MATCHMAKER MAG for adults contacts. Over 900 photos. Approval copy from: MATCHMAKER, (S.76), Chorley, PR7 4BS. Or ring: 01257 483335 (24 hours).

BEAUTIFUL RUSSIAN LADIES. Colour brochures and much more. Call Nick & Lilya. 01423 566766 (24hrs) www.russian-rendezvous.co.uk

PRIVATE ADULT PENFRIENDS – 3x27p stamps to EPPS, PO Box 36, Dartford, DA2 7ZU.

RESPECTABLE SINCERE marriage-minded Thai ladies seek like-minded gentlemen. Free brochure/ video. "Lawrence Lynch – dream weaver" (Louis Theroux BBC). 01562 748600 (24hrs). www.thai-professional.com

EYE LOVE

ATTRACTIVE, INTELLIGENT, sensual affectionate and independent lady, young mid 40s – seeks intellectual, passionate trustworthy caring charming, challenging and witty soulmate to flow together joyously. He must love classical music. London. Box 0871.

VIVALDO, 29, SEEKS IDA for relationship in Another Country. London. Box 0571.

AN ATTRACTIVE, SLIM, FIT, London lady, WLTM professional, (Legal/City), solvent, fit, London Man 45+ for who knows what. Yusz1@yahoo.co.uk.

TALL, WELL-BUILT, dark-haired, 58, separated, generous man WLTM attractive, fun, sexy lady to share happy times. If married, discretion assured. Yorkshire or London. richardbutler50@hotmail.com

LINGERIE LOVER. Suave, fit, fun, classy and cultured fiftyish company chairman (but no ' suit'), upmarket lifestyle, seeks discreet confidante with penchant for erotic underwear for mutually rewarding fun. Oxon/M4/London. Plutocrat69@yahoo.com or Box 0371.

ARTHUR DENT, 31, wltm Fenchurch, 25-30, for life, the universe and everything. Box 0666.

SHY CLEVER WISTFUL F sought by M 54, W10 - wolstandixie@hotmail.com

AMIABLE MALE, 58, occasionally assertive, capable of wit and culture, WLTM intelligent compatible female. Photo apreciated. London/Essex. Box 0171.

ISLE OF MAN. Professional lady, vivacious 33, seeks charming island man for wonderful relationship. Box 0271.

BOX NUMBER PREVIOUSLY MISSING! Eccentric, bookish male, sixties child, seeks libidinous underappreciated bluestocking for convoluted conversations, para-psychological peregrinations, tantric trysts and kindred spirituality. Central East, Far North, Anywhere. Box 0368.

I WANT TO HAVE AN AFFAIR in the London area. guiltlessfun@hotmail.com

IF YOU'RE WORLDLY, very successful, generous but attached and dream of discreet no-strings romantic liaisons with beautiful, sensuous woman (40's) who happens to be in great shape, has a lot of style is tactile, loyal and intelligent – let's meet and talk. Box 0971.

BROADMINDED, mature female wanted to accompany handsome tall male to the occasional adult party or similar. Prefer full busted ladies. Phone 07968 125120.

GENEROUS GENTLEMAN, fit 57, wishes to lie back and be ravished by sophisticated lady. Photo please. Box 1071.

The Open University

What can the Open University do for you?

We can offer you a place at one of the best universities in Britain. We'll provide you with a choice of 199 one off courses developed especially to enable you to study in your own time, for career development or personal interest or both!

We'll give you the support of a tutor, and the chance to meet your fellow students. You can choose from nine-month courses, diplomas, undergraduate degrees and a range of postgraduate qualifications. We also offer five introductory courses and 20 short courses. Subjects available include: Computing, Business Management, Technology, Modern Languages, Social Sciences, English Law, Arts, Science, Mathematics, Education and Health & Social Welfare.

The Open University is the acknowledged expert in helping people study in their own time. It's real value for money *and you can pay by monthly instalments.*

Did you know?

- **70% of OU undergraduate students remain in full-time employment throughout their studies**
- **25% of all British MBAs† come from the OU**
- **Over 30,000 employers have sponsored their staff on OU courses**
- **150,000 OU students are online from home**
- **Courses can be studied outside the UK**

†*Accredited by The Association of MBAs.*

☎ **Call the OU 24 hr Hotline quoting ref UGCBAA** 0870 9000 301

Advisers available 8.30 - 5.00pm

www.open.ac.uk/brochure/

To: The Open University, PO Box 625, Milton Keynes MK7 6YG
Please send me the following prospectus(es):
☐ Undergraduate Courses and Qualifications (C0003)
☐ Higher Degrees (HD03) **Complete in BLOCK CAPITALS**

Title Initials Surname

Address

Postcode Date of Birth / /

Tel (Day/Evening)

Email **Code: UGCBAA**

PRIVATE EYE

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

£2.40 PER WORD VAT inclusive

£24.00 minimum charge

EXTRAS:
Border £12.00
Two weeks on Private Eye website:
www.private-eye.co.uk with hyperlink: £10.00
FAX 020 7923 5401
E-MAIL: private-eye@communicationsteam.com
FEEDBACK FORM: www.private-eye.co.uk
DICTATE YOUR AD WITH CREDIT/DEBIT CARD
020 7837 4566
PRIVATE EYE CLASSFIED ADS,
COMMUNICATIONS TEAM,
3-11 PINE STREET, LONDON EC1R 0JH

NAME, ADDRESS & TEL NO:

.....

.....

.....

Signed: .....

Send your advertisement with cheque/postal orders or ACCESS, VISA, SWITCH, DELTA, SOLO, AMEX No.

NUMBER: .....

EXPIRY DATE: .....

ISSUE NUMBER (SWITCH): .....

☐ *Box number required.*

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

SPEAK ANOTHER LANGUAGE? SPEAK IT BETTER.

•FRENCH •SPANISH •Italian •GERMAN

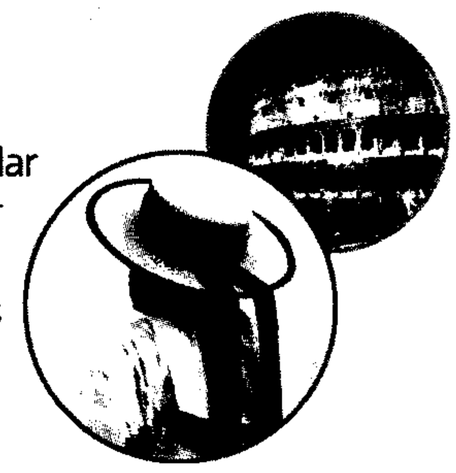
Audiomagazines for intermediate-to-advanced language learners

Now you can continue your language study month in and month out with *Champs-Elysées*, *Schau ins Land*, *Acquerello italiano*, and *Puerta del Sol*, internationally acclaimed audiomagazines unlike anything for language learners you've ever seen.

"...better than a language course." – About.com

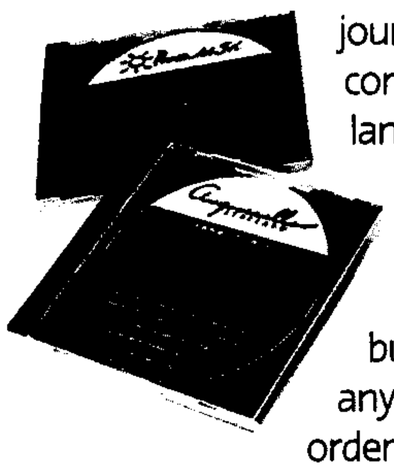
Authentic Radio-Style programmes

Each monthly (Spanish & Italian appear every 2 months) audiomagazine, hosted by popular native broadcasters, consists of an hour long radio-style programme on audiocassette or CD. An accompanying 60-70 page magazine contains a full printed transcript, a glossary averaging 600 words & expressions translated into English, plus scores of background notes on people, places, events, and grammatical issues.



On-going Language Learning in an Entertaining Cultural Context

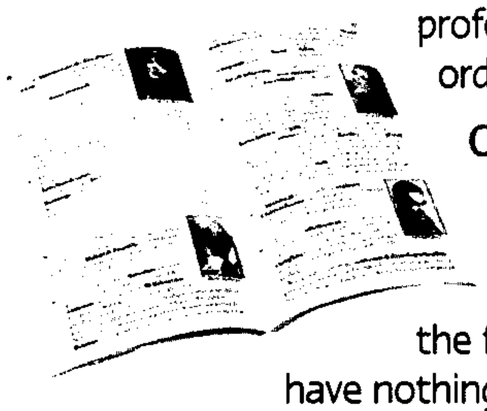
You'll hear original authentic interviews with politicians, writers, artists, sportsmen, journalists, celebrities, and segments covering current events and issues, and insights into contemporary culture and beloved traditions. By giving you an opportunity to hear the language as it's really spoken, we help you expand your vocabulary and vastly improve your ability to understand the spoken language.



The Most Flexible Way to Perfect Your Language Skills

Because each audiomagazine is portable, it's easy to integrate language study into your busy life. Work on fluency while commuting, walking the dog, exercising, cooking dinner, anytime and anywhere you want! If you need or want to make faster progress you can order the optional study supplements which are work sheets containing innovative listening exercises and grammar drills, and are available for each issue with the answers included.

Over and over again we are told there is no better product for sophisticated language learners. Why not find out for yourself what thousands of business people, teachers, diplomats, and professionals across the world are raving about. Just fill in the order form below, ring us, or order online.



Order Risk Free! Subscribe today!

DOUBLE MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE: Take 6 weeks to try your first edition. If it doesn't totally reenergize your language study, let us know and we will completely refund your money — you can even keep your first issue — so no returns hassle. Secondly, if ever in the future you decide it's not for you, we'll send you a refund for any issues not mailed. You have nothing to lose.

Champs-Elysees, Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road, Bristol BS1 6UG

Champs-Elysées AUDIOMAGAZINES

YES, Please rush me my first audiomagazine!

Champs-Elysées (French)	☐ 5 monthly editions on tape, £55 ☐ 11 monthly editions on tape, £99	☐ On CD, £65 ☐ On CD, £121	☐ Supplement, add £15 ☐ Supplement, add £33
Schau ins Land (German)	☐ 5 monthly editions on tape, £55 ☐ 11 monthly editions on tape, £99	☐ On CD, £65 ☐ On CD, £121	☐ Supplement, add £15 ☐ Supplement, add £33
Acquerello italiano (Italian)	☐ 6 bi-monthly editions on tape, £69	☐ On CD, £81	☐ Supplement, add £18
Puerta del Sol (Spanish)	☐ 6 bi-monthly editions on tape, £69	☐ On CD, £81	☐ Supplement, add £18

(All prices include P&P within the UK and overseas)

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms _____

Address _____

_____

☐ **Cheque enclosed** (payable to Champs-Elysées Ltd.)

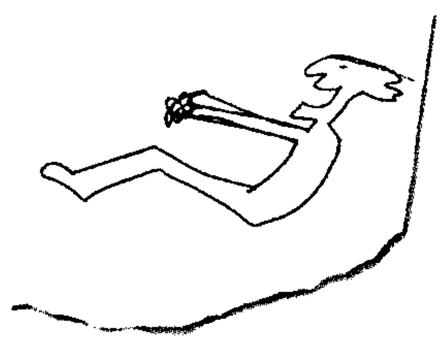
Debit my VISA/Mastercard/American Express/Eurocard/Switch/Diners

Card No. _____ **Expiry Date.** ☐☐/☐☐ **Issue** ☐☐ (Switch)

Credit card orders may be faxed on 0117 929 2426 Outside the UK call (44) 117 929 2320

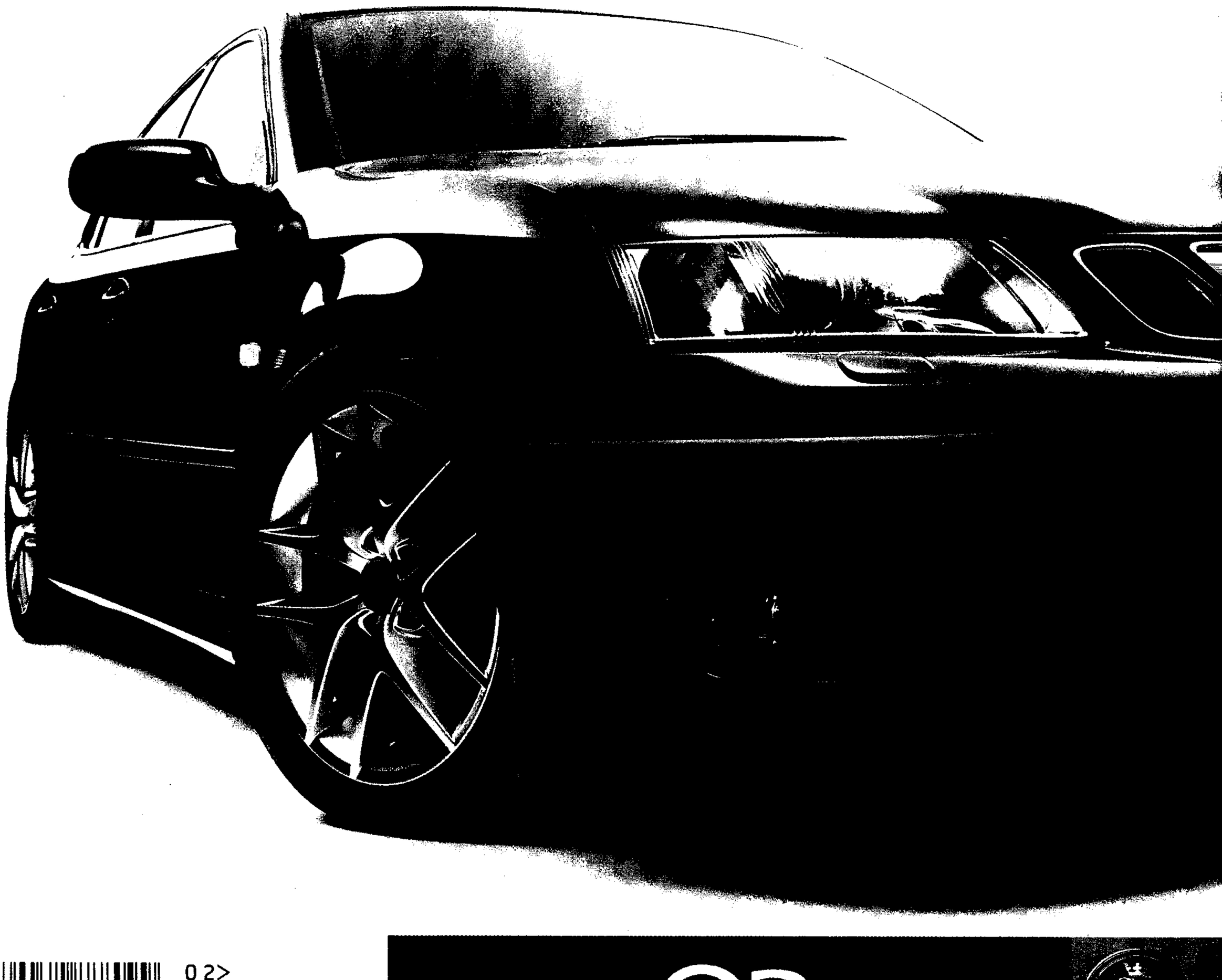
POST TO: CHAMPS-ELYSEES, DEPT. PE0103, FREEPOST LON 295, BRISTOL, BS1 6FA

There was a time when Germans feared Swedes. It's back.



The First Sketch of the all new Saab 9-3 Sport Saloon.

The Vikings gave the whole of Europe a hard time, especially their close neighbours across the Baltic. Now it's happened again with the launch of the new Saab 9-3 Sport Saloon. With a revolutionary new chassis and refined turbocharged engine, it gives both breathtaking performance and remarkable handling. In fact, it has already caused quite a stir amongst the motoring press. It seems our German competitors have every reason to be worried. And you have every reason to book a test drive. Call 0845 300 93 95. **www.saab.co.uk**



The all new Saab 93 Sport Saloon.

OFFICIAL FUEL CONSUMPTION IN MPG (LITRES/100KM): URBAN 23.9 (11.8), EXTRA URBAN 42.8MPG (6.6), COMBINED 33.2 (8.5).
CO_2 EMISSIONS 204G/KM. ALL FIGURES FOR SAAB 9-3 SPORT SALOON AERO (210BHP) WITH MANUAL GEARBOX. 9-3 RANGE FROM £18,495

9 770032 888099 02>